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TALKS TO WRITERS

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BY

LAFCADIO HEARN

SELECTED AND EDITED
WITH AN INTRODUCTION
BY

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NEW YORK
DODD, MEAD AND COMPANY
1920

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VAIL-BALLOU COMPANY
BINGHAMTON AND NEW YORK

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I

These chapters are reprinted from Lafcadio Hearn's "Interpretations of Literature," 1915, and from his "Life and Literature," 1917 — collections of the lectures he gave at the University of Tokyo between 1896 and 1902. Since the appearance of these lectures there has been a demand for separate groups of them in a form more available to the student. The present volume, therefore, brings together Hearn's remarks on the art of writing, in the hope that such an anthology of his principles and opinions may aid those who aspire in the literary craft.

For the benefit of the reader who may make the acquaintance of Hearn's lectures for the first time in this volume, it should be said that he lectured very slowly, choosing simple words and constructions, in order that the foreign language might be as easy as possible for his Japanese students; and some of his students managed to take down many of his lectures word for word. From their notes — the only record we have of Lafcadio Hearn the teacher — these chapters are selected. No attempt has been made at what might be called a reconstruction of the text. Ob-

vious slips in single words and phrases have been corrected, but passages of any elaborate difficulty have been omitted. The punctuation has been revised, and all dates, titles and quotations have been verified. If there is any oversight in any of these details, the fault is to be laid to the editor and to the note-takers, not to the lecturer. Should the reader be troubled by occasional repetitions in the various chapters, even by an occasional contradiction, he should remember that these are spoken words, which Hearn had no opportunity to revise.

II

Lafcadio Hearn's ideas about the art of writing are the ideas not of a journalist nor of a theorist, but of one who practises the art. He had a very simple body of doctrine, as available as truth itself, and perhaps as rarely attended to. Probably he would say that he gave his students nothing new; yet what he says comes to us with the force of originality, like all sincere remarks of the craftsman on his experience and his ideals. The most original thing an artist can do, he held, is to tell the truth about life as he has lived it; and the highest originality of the critic is to announce principles, however old, and deductions

from those principles, which he has arrived at through experience. Of course the artist will give us truth as it is affected by his own personality, and the critic will give us principles as he interprets them; the intelligent reader, however, will not be distressed by this mingling, will be pleased by it, rather, since he can always distinguish and enjoy separately both the experience recorded and the poet's way of recording it, both the principles of criticism and the attitude of the critic.

Lafcadio Hearn believed, in the first place, that literature is an art of emotional expression — that it is the business of the writer to record an emotion and to produce one. Obviously he followed the romantic definition of literature, making it practically identical with what Sir Philip Sidney meant when he spoke of poetry. This prejudice of Hearn's for the literature of power, for the books that move us, is somewhat singular when we observe the keenness of his appreciation for books of another kind, especially for philosophical works such as the writings of his beloved Herbert Spencer. The truth is that Hearn started as a disciple of the romantic school, but his intellectual interests were too great to be confined within even romantic horizons. He seems to have been a wide reader in every field, and whatever he read he turned to account in the judgments he pronounced upon life. We may

sometimes be uneasy when he limits the term literature to the books of emotional power; we should like to include the great historians, the great scientists and the great philosophers, who have left their ideas in monumental books; but our uneasiness is perhaps premature, for Hearn had somewhat the attitude of the French race which finds emotional possibilities even in the realm of ideas, and to him a book of philosophy can very well be emotional. If we take the liberty, moreover, to substitute for his term literature the term poetry, we have no further occasion to quarrel with him. Those books are poetical which render the quality of experience, which record not sensations, as he says, but our judgment upon sensations, which is emotion. To live in consciousness of the experience we are having, with the mind thoroughly alert to our own pronouncements of good and evil on each moment, is to live poetically. Lafcadio Hearn taught, therefore, that the art of writing is first of all the art of observing one's relations to life, one's emotions, one's memories, one's mature judgments. In the second place the art of writing is the art of recording these memories, emotions and judgments. His attitude toward literature needs, perhaps, no further definition. The other items in his theory are mere deductions from this simple formula.

For example, he says that literature should be moral. We are at first surprised to hear this from him, who certainly had little sympathy with those preaching tendencies which often mar the aesthetic inspiration of English letters. We should rather expect from him defence of art for art's sake. But it is, as a matter of fact, when he talks of art for art's sake, that he tells us that literature should be moral. If when we read a book we come in the presence of beauty and respond emotionally to that presence, we are training our character and putting ourselves in an attitude in which it will be more difficult to feel or think or do an unworthy thing. The greater the beauty which the book brings to us, the more pronounced this moral effect will be. This doctrine is of the utmost simplicity, and artists accept it as an obvious statement of what men of their temperament observe daily; when you leave the theatre after a noble performance, or the concert hall after hearing a great symphony, for the moment at least you are lifted above mean considerations and are less likely than at normal times to act in an unworthy way. This is the effect of great art. There are many readers, however, of the Puritan or literal-minded tradition, who may misread the doctrine — who may think, for example, that a book, to be a work of art, and therefore to produce this moral effect, must concern itself with the

preaching of morality. Such readers may not understand that Hearn, like other artists, would get from a page of Flaubert or Maupassant that effect of beauty which in turn produces an elevation of morals. Can a book which deals with an unhappy or not quite respectable subject be beautiful, and thereby produce sound training in goodness? Hearn would answer yes, and he probably would add that in order to produce the training in goodness such a book must not preach, for if it preached, it would be in danger of becoming immoral. No doubt "Moll Flanders" was intended by Defoe to teach a sound lesson, but the effect of it is little short of prurient. Much of "Madame Bovary," for an opposite example, is intended to be a work of art, a picture of life which should charm by its beauty; the effect of it, thinks Hearn, is to make us wish, not to be like Madame Bovary, but to be like the author of the book, who could create a thing so beautiful.

The brief talk on the "Question of the Highest Art" is important quite out of proportion to its brevity, not only for the illustrations it gives of this doctrine of morals in literature, but also for the suggestion of an attendant truth not yet fully investigated. To prove his point that the highest kind of writing, though pursued for esthetic reasons, will have a moral effect, Hearn cites the experience of love, which furnishes mat-

ter for most western poetry, fiction and drama. To love another is a moral experience, he says, even if the person loved be unworthy. Certainly it is a great misfortune and a great folly to love a bad person; but in spite of the misfortune and the folly a certain moral experience comes of it, which has immense value to a wholesome nature. The experience is one which very few poets and philosophers dwell upon; yet it is the important, the supremely important, aspect of love. What is it? It is the sudden impulse to unselfishness. Taking it for granted, continues Hearn, that some forms of beauty inspire men with such affection as to make them temporarily unselfish, there is little reason to doubt that in future very much higher forms of beauty will produce the same effect. What will those forms of beauty be? Hearn does not know, but the mere suggestion of them reminds us that no one yet knows with certainty the effect of the kinds of beauty which art has already produced. We do not know, for example, the difference in character which would be effected by continued reading of Browning, of Matthew Arnold, of Swinburne. This problem of the power of art on the audience must some day be solved; no science of esthetics will begin to appeal to us until it brings some sort of answer to the question. Though he brought no answer, Hearn constantly played with the mystery, and showed

that he realized its importance. So long as we do not know what will happen to the man who reads us, we may preserve our peace of mind by pretending the influence of books is a matter of fortune. When we finally discover, however, what effect each kind of writing has, to write in any kind will be to take a momentous moral decision.

III

These general ideas of Hearn's about the art of writing have a wide and persistent bearing. Perhaps the novice will not be aware of it at once. The reader of these lectures who desires to become a writer will perhaps find a more immediate interest in the specific things Hearn says of the craft. First of all, the beginner will learn, with it may be a check to his ardour, that literature is created only by unceasing discipline. The art has been so long practised, Hearn thinks, that we cannot afford to trust simply to native ability, neglecting the hints and directions which our precursors might give us; the artist is primarily, therefore, a disciple, willing to follow proved methods and to master old technique, in the hope of expressing himself with some originality at last. In this point of view Hearn was not departing from the faith of that romantic period in

European literature with which his temperament on the whole allied him; Shelley and Byron, Hugo and Baudelaire were comparatively learned men, steeped in old literature, and their technique was not an improvisation but a turning of familiar instruments to new uses. Moreover, the great liberating geniuses of the nineteenth century had a training of the mind which gave them powers of observation such as the improviser can hardly possess. It is the mind that sees, rather than the eye; the right kind of reading and the right sort of meditation will do more to cure us of blindness than even an adjustment of our glasses. Of Hearn himself, whose eyesight was cruelly handicapped, it is said that his acuteness of observation amazed his companions, as indeed it will always astonish his readers. He was disciplined in the two approaches to his art,— in the methods that older masters had used, and in that keenness of sight which is a skill, as I said, less of the eye than of the mind.

Keenness of sight Hearn places first, as the very foundation of the writer's art. When we know what we wish to say, and not till then, we shall know how to say it. But it is hard indeed to know precisely what we wish to say, and in order to secure any portion of this knowledge we must cultivate vision both outward and inward. We may think, for example, that we are familiar

with the appearance of our room at home, or of the street down which we daily walk; but when we have occasion to portray the room or the street from memory, try as we will, we are not likely to be faithful to more than a few facts, and those facts, perhaps, will not be the ones we intended to stress. Yet since those facts are the one grip we have on reality, we must train ourselves, by constant exercise of the memory and by comparison with the original, to see more facts of the same kind, and to build up the picture of truth from whatever foundation our memory thus by instinct and training offers to us. Hearn illustrates his point by the story of the Japanese painter who when he drew horses always began at the tail. The Westerner would perhaps begin at the head, with some half-realized conviction that the head affords a more auspicious start. But so long as we begin with what we really see, it makes no difference whether head, tail, or hoof show first in the picture. Similarly, we should cultivate and cherish clear sight if we desire to portray inward things — an emotional experience, for example. We must look at the emotion until we have grasped all its features. At our first attempt to record an experience so common yet so subtle, we shall probably be chagrined to discover that the emotion was vaguer than we fancied, and we may too hastily abandon the attempt to record it

in words. We should write it down, however, as faithfully as we can; after a few days we should reread the account and substitute a clearer line for whatever seems on that reading to be blurred; after a few days more we should again reread and reread and revise, always with the eye on our memory of the experience, to make sure that the portrait is constantly approaching the original. This is severe discipline, but no good work, as Hearn reminds us, can be done without immense pains. With practice the eye becomes quicker and more critical, and therefore fewer revisions are needed.

I have spoken of the picture of a thing and the picture of an idea, in order to illustrate the twofold kind of sight which Hearn would have us cultivate as a first step toward truth-telling in art. But he has no use for the outward vision without the inward. The picture of the horse, for example, would be meaningless for him if it were merely photographic, if it left you in the position of looking at the horse and nothing more. For the purposes of art, he reminds us, every thing and every experience should carry with it some emotion peculiar to it and peculiar to us; if the rose or the star stirs in the race certain feelings, it should also produce in each of us our version, as it were, of those feelings, and our account of rose or star, therefore, should be marked by some

emotional accent peculiarly ours. It is in this sense that art is a criticism, or sifting, or interpretation, of life; as each of us sincerely reports the truth, we indicate at the same time our instinctive judgment of what is significant in it. To be important to the human spirit, any statement of truth, thinks Hearn, should be art — should contain, that is, the judgment of the individual temperament upon the facts. Because he finds this value in the judgment passed upon the crude experience, Hearn is careful to say that art should indicate emotion but not sensation — a quite different thing. Sensation is feeling without judgment; emotion is the instinctive judgment passed upon sensation. The man who stubs his toe on a concealed brick may have the emotion of anger, or of embarrassment, or of amusement; the sensation in any case will have been the same. An attempt to render the sensation without the emotion would be as meaningless as an attempt to paint a horse or a landscape without giving any impression of pleasure or displeasure, of beauty or ugliness.

In his own criticism Hearn left us many illustrations of the insight he advocated. One is the remarkable lecture on the value of the supernatural in literature, in which he tells us that what fascinates us in ghost stories is the recognition of emotions we have had in dreams, and that

a great story based on the supernatural must therefore follow closely the essential characteristics of dream experience. But what are those characteristics? He tells us with extraordinary precision, and identifies them in well known tales of the supernatural. To be sure, he draws heavily upon Herbert Spencer in his analysis of dream experience, but he has made the theory his own, and he shows his skill in observation by the brilliant identification of the theory with the examples he selects. His mind was trained by the philosopher; his eye became consequently more keen. A second illustration of his insight, and one only less remarkable, is his discussion of the Norse sagas and of Björnson's writing. He is making a contrast between the literature which owes most to keen outward observation, and that which is inward and reflective; taking a hint from Professor Ker, he shows how the Norse writers give the incidents of an episode in the order in which they presented themselves to the senses, and that the resulting accuracy produces not only the effect of great realism, but also paradoxically the effect of strong personality. Even when we decide to omit from our account of life all that is peculiar to our point of view, our opinion as to what is peculiar in our point of view will set us off from other men.

When once the writer has seen clearly what he

wishes to say, he has but to find the word for it. Hearn had a natural ear for style in the sense of cadence and verbal decoration, but he resolutely set himself against the admiration of language for language's sake, in order to follow consistently his principle that the idea or the emotion should come first and the word or the phrase should adapt itself to it. It is interesting to watch in the chapter on Sir Thomas Browne, for example, how enthusiastic Hearn really is about a style in which music for its own sake counts as heavily as words for the sake of precision; he loves the ground-swell of Sir Thomas's style, yet he takes pains to warn us against it, and against all seeking after anything in language beyond the faithful service of the subject matter. Here it seems to me Hearn is quite right in his principle, but he presses his principle somewhat narrowly. Granting that the word and the phrase should faithfully serve the subject matter, we may yet hold that there is a subject matter which may properly be served by a style wrought chiefly of verbal music. Not all that Sir Thomas Browne had to convey is summed up by a skeleton outline of his ideas. His style marvellously suggests certain possibilities and charms in his character, and without its eloquence we should miss the best part of his convincing personality. Hearn seems more at home with his principle of language for the subject's

sake when he discusses individual words. His skill in suggesting to a foreign audience what is felt or half felt by the English reader in such a word as "ghastly," for example, could hardly be bettered by any criticism. In his search for the right word he made himself a scholar of rare sensitiveness, or perhaps it would be better to say, a collector of delicate connotations; whether he talks from the point of view of the writer or of the reader, his discussion of single words is a most timely inspiration in these days when writers for the most part have ceased to be sensitive to the word and at best put attention only on the large phrase. Hearn is singularly at home with his principle also when he discusses such a style as that of Baudelaire. The difficulty of what he accomplished in his lecture on that French prose poet will be realized if we recall that he was talking to a Japanese audience about the style of a French author, and he lectured in English. Yet we feel in every paragraph, whether he is discussing Baudelaire or translating him, some of that quality in the French master which he is trying to convey.

The most valuable counsel which Hearn gives us in his discussion of language is the doctrine that every literature must grow out of the vernacular. This is a faith apparently understood only by highly sophisticated civilizations. In the

United States, for example, nothing is more vulgar at the present time than the half-mastered, but academic, vocabulary used by the journalist or the average magazine contributor in his serious moments — that is, when he is not writing palpable slang. It is the person of inadequate reading who, when he tries to be dignified or effective, reaches instinctively for a conventional vocabulary. The really wise critic, however, has developed an ear for those racy and sincere parts of the vocabulary which are not yet conventional but still carry the smack of the environment and the personality which produce them. Reading over once more all that Hearn says of founding a national literature on the vernacular, I cannot but think of books and articles now discussed in our journals which tell us that there is an American language — as indeed there is — but which try to prove the point by a summary of American slang and American eccentricities. What Hearn was looking for in vernacular speech was the beautiful word and the precise word. His doctrine so understood is as sound for us as it was for the Japanese.

III

Next after his discussion of clearsightedness and his doctrine of the vernacular vocabulary I should put Hearn's constant advice to young writers to get some preliminary skill by translating. It should not escape us that in all his talk of translation Hearn maintains at one and the same time both the international and the national points of view. Translation is good practise for the young writer; it also serves to make nations known to each other and to spread the commonwealth of letters. So much for the international point of view. The writer, however, who wishes to make known his own country abroad should be as loyally national in his creative work as he is hospitably international in his translating. The two points of view are supplementary. When we read or when we translate, we open our hearts to news from other lands — indeed it is our hearts we open, since by such exercises we are training our sympathies as well as our minds to feel our kinship with the race; but if the people of other lands are to have the same benefit of information when they translate our literature into their language, we must take care that our writing will give a faithful picture of our own life. The kind of book that, from this point of view, is

worth translating is that which will give most information about the race which produced it. When we ourselves write, therefore, if we have any idea that our work is ever to be of value outside our own borders, we should write of ourselves, and should record not what we imagine will concern the possible foreign reader who may translate us, but what we know does concern us. Hearn was perhaps impelled to give this advice by the tendency among Japanese writers to imitate Western literature. When we read the translation of a short story or a novel from Nippon, we are sometimes startled to observe that we are merely meeting one more Tolstoi or Meredith or Maupassant, transposed in manner but still essentially European in spirit; whereas what we want is not a reflection of the West but an informing portrait of the East. Hearn felt that Japan would profit by a knowledge of western literature in translation, but that her own literature, if we are to profit by it, should be racial and original. Once more the advice applies as well to the United States as to Japan. At this moment we are in peculiar need of a contemporary literature which will provide information about us for the curiosity of other nations, yet we have few novels or dramas or poems which on reflection we should care to distribute as our authentic portrait. We have, however, a number of well-

written books which reflect Europe and European problems.

IV

I have mentioned the general attitude Hearn took toward literature, as an emotional art, as a moral art, and as a discipline, and I have indicated his emphasis upon clear vision as the key to expression, his fear of style for its own sake, his love of the right word and of the vernacular, the value he set on translation both as literary exercise and as international propaganda, and his insistence upon nationalism in creative writing. In his discussion of these points the reader will observe that he was, as he said, a workman talking of his craft. Such talk is for me, at least, the most precious kind of criticism. The poet gives us his observations, his insights, of the experience of life; the critic in turn gives us his observations of the experience of poetry. It is the same art of seeing clearly and reporting correctly. The critic's insight, however, gains immensely from the fact that what he talks about he has himself often done. If there is, unfortunately, no magic by which a Lafcadio Hearn can teach us to write with his own skill, at least in his talk of his beloved art there is a kindling elo-

quence that rouses in us something of his own desire to see the beauty of life and to tell the truth about it.

TALKS TO WRITERS

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CHAPTER I

ON THE RELATION OF LIFE AND CHARACTER TO LITERATURE

I

The three main divisions of literature are poetry, drama and fiction. I want to speak of these in relation to the lives of the men who engage in their production. That is what is meant by the title of the essay. This is a very important subject for every student of literature to consider. Any one wishing to become an author in any one of the three branches of literature that I have mentioned, must ask himself honestly several questions and be able to answer them in the affirmative. If he cannot answer them in the affirmative, he had better leave literature alone — for the time being at least.

The first question is, Have I creative power? That is to say, Am I able to produce either poetry, or fiction, or drama, by my own experience, out of my own mental operation, without following the ideas of other people, or being influenced,

consciously or unconsciously, only by the opinions of others. If you cannot answer this question with an honest "Yes," then you can only be an imitator.

But suppose that you can answer this first question in the affirmative, there remains another question almost equally important to ask. It is this: Can I devote my life — or at least the best part of my leisure time — to literary work? If you cannot be sure of much time to spare, you should be sure, at least, of being able to give, every day of your existence, a short time to one sustained object. If you are not sure of being able to do this, you will find the way of literature very hard indeed.

But there is yet a third question to be asked. Even if you have the power and the time, it is necessary that you should determine this matter: Must I mingle with society and take my part in everyday life, or should I seek quiet and isolation? The third question can be answered only according to the character of your particular literary power. Certain kinds of literature require solitude — cannot be produced without it. Other kinds of literature oblige the author, whether he likes or does not like it, to mix a great deal with people, to observe all their actions, and to fill himself with every possible experience of active life.

I think now the ground is swept. We can begin the second section of the lecture.

II

What I have suggested in the above series of questions, must now be dwelt upon in detail. Let us first consider poetry in its relation to the conduct of life.

Poetry is not one of those forms of literature which require that the author shall mix a great deal with active life. On the contrary, poetry is especially the art of solitude. Poetry requires a great deal of time, a great deal of thought, a great deal of silent work, and all the sincerity of which a man's nature is capable. The less that a real poet mingles with social life, the better for his art. This is a well known fact in all countries. It is so well known that if a young poet allows himself to be flattered and petted and made much of by the rich and mighty, it is commonly said that he is going to be ruined. One cannot be perfectly sincere to oneself and become an object of fashionable attention. It is utterly impossible. The art of poetry requires that the poet be as solitary in his house as a priest. I do not mean that it should be necessary to be an ascetic, or anything of that kind, nor that he should not be

troubled with family cares. It is very necessary that he should have a family, and know all that the family means, in order to be a good poet. But he must certainly renounce what are generally called social pleasures. In the same degree that he fails to do this, he is almost certain to fail in his poetry.

Let us here consider a few extraordinary facts about the poetical life. Of course you know that poetry does not mean merely writing verses, no matter how correct the verses may be. It means the power to move men's hearts and minds by verse. Now a Persian poet once observed that no bad man could possibly become a poet. There is a good deal of truth in that statement, notwithstanding some apparent exceptions. You have doubtless read that many European poets were bad men. But you must take such statements with a great deal of reserve and qualification. I imagine, for example, that you will immediately think of Byron. But Byron was not fairly judged; and you must not allow yourselves to accept any mere religious or social declaration about the character of the poet. The real facts are that Byron was unjustly treated and goaded and irritated into immoral courses. Moreover, the deeper nature of Byron was essentially generous and sympathetic, and when he follows the inspiration of his deeper nature, he gives

us the best of what he has. I might speak of many other poets; you will always find that there was something good and generous in the man, however great his faults may have appeared on the surface. Indeed, I knew only one or two exceptions to this Persian observation that no bad man can be a poet, and these exceptions are not satisfactory. We find in the time of the Italian renaissance a few extraordinarily wicked men who made a reputation as poets. I might mention for example the name of Malatesta. But when we come to examine the literary work of this cruel and ferocious man, we find that its only merit is the perfect correctness of the verse. Perfectly correct verse was greatly esteemed in that age; but we are much wiser today. We now know that no mere correctness qualifies verse as true poetry; and I do not think that the Persian poet would have found any poetry in the love verses of the wicked Malatesta.

Of course when the Persian poet spoke of a bad man, he meant what is bad according to the consensus of human experience. I should not call a man bad only because he happened to offend against particular conventions. I should call a man bad only in so far as his relation to others proves him to be cruel, unfeeling, selfish, and ungrateful. No such man as that can write poetry.

So the fundamental truth of this whole matter

is simply that a poet must be born a poet — as the English proverb says, "A poet is born, not made." No amount of education will make a man a poet. Every year in England two great universities turn out about four thousand good men stuffed with all that systematic education can force into them. German universities can do better than that. French universities do quite as well. But out of these thousands and thousands, how many can become poets? Not half a dozen in all the countries of Europe together. Education will help a poet; it will greatly enrich his powers of language; it will train his ear to the charm of musical sound, and train his brain to perceive all possible laws of proportion and taste in form. But it cannot make him a poet. I suppose there are today in England alone at least thirty thousand people capable of writing almost any form of correct verse. Yet perhaps not even two of them are poets; for poetry is a question of character and temperament. One must be born with a love of the beautiful, with great capacities for sympathy, with a certain gentleness of disposition, in order to be able to act upon the feelings of men through literature. The qualities that make the poet belong to the softer side of human nature — hence the proverb that the poet is a man who is half a woman. I think that you have all observed that certain ad-

mirable but hard kinds of mind are almost insensible to sentiment in literature. As a general rule — though exceptions have existed — mathematicians cannot be poets; the great Goethe, distinguished as he was in science by reason of his constructive imagination, was singularly deficient in mathematical capacity. It would appear that certain powers of the mind cannot be cultivated except at the expense of other faculties. Everywhere poets have been recognized as more or less unpractical in active life; they rarely make good business men; they never can do certain things requiring insensibility to the feelings of others. Essentially sympathetic, their conduct is ruled in all things by feelings rather than by cold reason, and that is why they very often make such unfortunate mistakes. But they should be thought of as representing in the highest degree what is emotional in man. If the whole world were governed by hard and fast rules, it would become very much more difficult to live in than it now is because of the poets who help to keep alive the more generous impulses of human nature. That is why they have been called priests.

I do not think that in Japan the most difficult form of sustained emotional effort has ever been comparable to the art of poetry in Western countries. It is, indeed, such a difficult thing, to compare the achievements of two countries, that if I

were speaking only of poetry as embodied in verse, I think that you would find my remarks decidedly extravagant. But poetry is not confined to forms of verse. There may be poetry in beautiful prose; and some of the very best English literature deserves to be qualified as prose-poetry, because it produces the emotional effect of verse. Now any form of literature that really does this requires all the time and all the power that the writer can spare. And it is for this reason that the life of the man who writes it must be solitary — a life of devotion to art.

III

Let us now turn to fiction — excluding the variety of it which might be termed prose-poetry. Fiction should be, in these times, the Mirror of Life. What is a man to do who would devote his time and life in this direction? We must stop and qualify.

Although there are nominally so many different schools of European fiction — Classical, Romantic, Realistic, Naturalistic, Psychological, Problematical, etc., etc., — we need not bother ourselves with this variety of distinctions, but simply divide fiction into two classes — subjective and objective. Fiction is either a picture of things

imagined, or a picture of things actually seen. Can we make a preference? From the artistic point of view I am not sure that we can; for, contrary to what vulgar public opinion believes, the greatest works of fiction and drama have really been subjective, not objective. I need not remind you that Shakespeare did not see and did not experience the incidents of his astonishing plays, and I need not remind you that the great Greek dramatists did not see the facts of tragedy which they put upon the stage and which powerfully move our hearts. This is an astonishing fact, that the mind should perceive more clearly than the eyes — but it is only when the mind is that of a genius. From the artistic standpoint we cannot, nevertheless, dare to say that one method of literature is necessarily better than the other, merely because the greatest work happens to have been done by that method. In some future time we might find an objective method made equally great. And from the individual point of view, from the point of view of the young author, the young student, a preference is absolutely necessary. It is all-important that he should discover in what direction his literary strength is growing. If he feels that he can do better by imagination than by observation, then let him by all means cultivate romantic work. But if he feels sure that he can do better by using his senses — by observing,

comparing — then he must, as a duty to himself, adopt a realistic method. And the conduct of his life in relation to literature must be decided according to which path he decides to take.

As I told you, the highest forms of fiction and drama have been the work of intuition, of imagination. Thackeray, for example, no more than Shakespeare actually saw or experienced what he put into his novels. Yet those novels much surpassed the novels of Miss Brontë, who only wrote what she heard and saw and felt. If you did not know the real facts of the case, you would think that Thackeray was more realistic than Miss Brontë. Great imaginative work is more realistic than reality itself, more apparently objective than the result of objective study. But as I reminded you, it is only a genius who can reach this sort of realism through intuition. However, there are minor degrees of genius. You must have noticed some of these among yourselves. In any gathering of students there are always a few remarkable persons in whom the other students are willing to put their trust whenever any emergency arises. Suppose a thousand students are in a difficult position of some kind or anxious about something; presently out of that thousand, leaders or guides or advisors would come forward. It is not necessary at all that they should

be particularly strong or formidable persons; what is wanted in a time of embarrassment or danger is a good head, not a strong arm. You instinctively know, I presume, that he who has the best head among you is not necessarily the best scholar. It is not scholarship that is needed for difficult circumstances; it is what we call "mother-wit," strong common sense, that is what we commonly mean in England by "a good head." Persons of this kind do not often make mistakes. Notice how they act when they come in contact with strangers — they remain quite at ease, unembarrassed, and they know what to do and what to say on meeting extraordinary persons or extraordinary events. Now what is this power, this "mother-wit"? It is a kind of strong intuition. It is the best of all wits that a man can be born to. If a man have this gift in a very great degree, and if he happen at the same time to have a love of literature, he can be a great dramatist or a great novelist. There is the real subjective worker. He has no difficulty in creating imaginary persons, and making them perform their parts; he has been born with the knowledge of what most kinds of men and women would do under certain circumstances. But a high degree of genius is not often found in this direction; all that I want you to bear clearly in mind, is that for subjective work, imaginative work, you must

know yourselves to possess a certain amount of this intuition. Unless you have it, it were better to work in other directions.

The dramatic faculty, this true creative power of which I am speaking, is always rare in the highest degree. When we find it at all in these days, we find it only in minor degrees. Very possibly it exists in varying states in minds that never cultivate it — not at least in a literary direction. For men having this power now-a-days are likely to use their constructive imagination in directions which assure material success much more certainly than literature can ever do. They may become diplomatists, or great men of business, or bankers, or political leaders; their knowledge of human nature and their intuition of human motives can help them equally well in many other directions besides literature, and in most directions vastly better. This is a very different kind of character from the character of the emotional poet. It is much more varied, and it is much stronger. To speak of any rules for the conduct of literary life in the case of such men is useless. They need no counsel. They do very much as they please, and obstacles never dishearten them. It is worth noting, however, that they generally take an active part in social life; it is more interesting for them than a play; it furnishes them with continual motives of inspira-

tion; and it has no terror for them of any kind. They are like strong swimmers accustomed to surf. I suppose you know that while almost everybody knows how to swim more or less, surf-swimmers are not very common. In America or other countries good surf-swimmers get high wages in the Government life-saving service; one must not only have learned from childhood, but must have great natural strength and skill. Now in the great sea of social life, where clumsy people are so easily drowned, the character of which I speak is like that of a strong surf-swimmer. He has nothing to fear from breakers. Observe also that men of this class, as the history of English literature especially shows, always find time to do what they want, and do not trouble themselves much about the "wear and tear" of social duty. Take, for example, the history of Victorian literature. Only one of the four great Victorian poets possessed the dramatic faculty in a high degree — Robert Browning. Tennyson, Rossetti, and Swinburne led lives of solitude and meditation; Browning on the other hand was constantly in society, studying human nature as well as obtaining enjoyment from social experience. Or take again the prose-writers. The great romantic novelists were all solitary men; the great dramatic novelists were essentially social men. Thackeray, for instance, was especially a man of

society. Or to take a still later example, Meredith, the greatest of English psychological novelists, is of course a social figure. It was in the life of the upper classes that he found the substance of his extraordinary novels. Not to multiply examples, which would require too much time, it may be said that as a general rule, solitude is of no use to men of creative genius.

IV

I think I have shown you, or suggested to you, that two great departments of literature — the emotional, as represented especially by poetry; and the creative, as especially represented by drama or the dramatic novels — depend altogether upon character, upon inheritance. You cannot make a great poet or a great dramatist by education, though education may help. And you have seen that the two kinds of character belonging respectively to romantic literature and to realistic literature are almost exactly opposed to each other. Both are rare. It is not likely in these days that many among us can hope to belong to either class. We generally know whether we belong to one or the other of them at an early period of life. The extraordinary faculties usually, though not always, manifest them-

selves in youth. It is true that, very rarely, a great talent only develops about middle age — this occurring chiefly in the case of prose-writers. But unless we have the very best of reasons to believe ourselves born to great things in literature, it is much better not to imagine that we have any special mission. Most students of literature are more likely to belong to the third class than to either of the classes preceding, and it is of the third class especially that something useful may be said.

The ordinary class of literary men must depend chiefly upon observation and constant practice. They cannot hope for sudden inspiration or for extraordinary intuition. They must find truth and beauty by painfully searching for them; and they can learn how to express what they see and feel only by years of study and application. Education for these is almost, though not absolutely, indispensable. I say "not absolutely," because self-training can sometimes supply all, and more, that the ordinary education is capable of giving. But as a rule to which the exceptions are few, the ordinary student must depend upon his college training. Without it, it is very likely that he will always remain in his work what we call in literature "provincial." Provincialism as a literary term does not mean a country tone, a rustic clumsiness of thinking and speaking; it

means a strong tendency to the commonplace, an inclination to dwell upon things universally known as if they were new discoveries; and it also means the habit of allowing oneself to be so unduly influenced by some one book or another, or by one class of ideas, that any well-educated reader recognizes at once the source of every idea expressed. This is provincialism. The great danger in self-education is that it leaves a man all his life in the provincial stage, unless he happens to have extraordinary chances, extraordinary tastes, and very much time to cultivate both.

The most important thing for the literary student, with a university training, to do at the beginning of a literary career, is to find out as soon as possible in what direction his intellectual strength chiefly lies. It may take years to find this out; but until it is found out he is scarcely likely to do anything great. Where absolute genius does not exist, literature must depend upon the cultivation of a man's best faculties in a single direction. To attempt work in a number of directions is always hazardous, and seldom gives good results. Every literary man has to arrive at this conclusion. It is true that you find in foreign literature cases of men not absolute geniuses, who have done well both in poetry and in prose, or in prose-fiction and in drama — that is, in apparently two directions. I should not instance Vic-

tor Hugo; his is a case of pure genius; but I should take such examples as Meredith in England, or Björnson in Norway, as better illustrating what I wish to say. You must remember that in cases like these the two different kinds of literature produced are really very close to each other, so close that one absolutely grows out of the other. For example, the great Norwegian dramatist began as a writer of stories and novels, all of which were intensely dramatic in form. From the dramatic novel to the play is but a short step. Or in the case of the English novelist and poet, we really find illustrations of only one and the same faculty both in his poetry and in his prose. The novels in one case are essentially psychological novels; the poetry is essentially psychological poetry. Again Browning's plays are scarcely more than the development in dramatic form of the ideas to be found in the dramatic poems. Or take the case of Kingsley — essentially a romantic — romantic of the very first class. He was great in poetry and great in prose; but there is an extraordinary resemblance between the poetry and the prose in his case, and he was wise enough to write very little poetry, for he knew where his chief strength lay. If you want to see and judge for yourself, observe the verse of Kingsley's poem on "Edith of the Swan-Neck," and then read a page or two of the romance of "Hereward." I

could give you fifty examples of the same kind in English literature. Men have succeeded in two directions only when one of these naturally led into the other. But no student should make the serious mistake — a mistake which hundreds of trained English men of letters are making today — of trying to write in two entirely different and opposed directions — for example, in romantic poetry and realistic prose. It is very necessary to know in which way your tastes should be cultivated, in which way you are most strong. Mediocrity is the certain result of not knowing. For after all, this last class of literature, like every other, depends for success upon character — upon inborn conditions, upon inheritance of tastes and feelings and tendencies. Once that you know these, the way becomes plain, though not smooth; everything thereafter depends upon hard work, constant effort.

Should one seek or avoid solitude in the pursuance of this ordinary class of literary aims? That again depends upon character. It is first necessary to know your strength, to decide upon the direction to take; these things having been settled, you must know whether you have to depend upon feeling and imagination as well as upon observation, or upon observation only. Your natural disposition will then instruct you. If you find that you can work best in solitude, it is a duty

both to yourself and to literature to deny yourself social engagements that may interfere with the production of good work.

All this leads to the subject of an extraordinary difficulty in the way of any new Japanese literature, a difficulty about which I wanted to talk to you from the first. I think you know that leisure is essential to the production of any art in any country — that is, any national art. I am not speaking of those extraordinary exceptions furnished by men able to produce wonderful things under any circumstances. Such exceptional men do not make national art; they produce a few inimitable works of genius. An art grows into existence out of the slow labour and thought and feelings of thousands. In that sense, leisure is absolutely necessary to art. Need I remind you that every Japanese art has been the result of generations of leisurely life? Those who made the now famous arts of Japan — literature as well as ceramics or painting or metal work — were not men who did their work in a hurry. Nobody was in a hurry in ancient times. Those elaborate ceremonies, now known as tea-ceremonies, indicate the life of a very leisurely and very aesthetic period. I mention that as one illustration of many things. Today, although some people try to insist that the arts of Japan are as flourishing as ever, the best judges frankly

declare that the old arts are being destroyed. It is not only foreign influence in the shape of bad taste that is destroying them; it is the want of leisure. Every year the time formerly allowed for pleasure of any kind is becoming more and more curtailed. None of you who are here listening to me can fail to remember a period when people had much more time than they have now. And none of you will fail to see a period in which the want of time will become much more painful, much more terrible than at present. For your civilization is gradually but surely taking an industrial character; and in the time when it shall have become almost purely industrial there will be very little leisure indeed. Very possibly you are thinking that England, Germany, and France are essentially industrial countries — though able to produce so much art. But the conditions are not the same. Industrialism in other countries has not rendered impossible the formation of wealthy leisure classes; those leisure classes still exist, and they have rendered possible, especially in England, the production of great literature. A very long time indeed must elapse before Japan can present an analogous condition.

The want of time you will feel every year more and more. And there are other and more serious difficulties to think about. Every few years young Japanese scholars who have been trained

abroad in the universities of Europe — who have been greatly praised there, and who show every promise — return to Japan. After their return, what a burden of obligations is thrust upon their shoulders! They have, to begin with, to assume the cares of a family; they have to become public officers, and to perform official duty for a much greater number of hours than would be asked of men in similar positions abroad; and under no circumstances can they hope for that right to dispose of their own time which is allowed to professors in foreign countries. No; they must at once accept onerous positions which involve hundreds of duties and which are very likely to keep a man occupied on many days of the year from sunrise until a late hour of the night. Even what are thought and what used really to be pleasurable occasions, have ceased to be pleasing; time is lacking for the pleasure, but the fatigue and the pain remain. I need not particularize how many festivals, banquets, public and private celebrations, any public official is obliged to attend. At present this cannot be helped. It is the struggle between the old state and the new; and the readjustment will take many years to effect. But is it any wonder that these scholars do not produce great things in literature? It is common for foreigners to say that the best Japanese scholars do not seem to do anything after they return to

Japan. The fact is that they do too much, but not of the kind that leaves a permanent work.

Most of you, whether rich or otherwise, will be asked after your university life is over to do a great deal too much. I imagine that most of you will have to do the work of at least three men. Trained teachers, trained officers, trained men of any kind, are still rare. There are not enough of them; there is too much to do, and too few men to do it. And in the face of these unquestionable facts, how can you hope to produce any literature? Assuredly it is very discouraging. It could not be more discouraging.

There is an old English proverb that seems opportune in this connection:

> For every trouble under the sun
> There is a remedy, or there is none.
> If there is one, try to find it;
> If there be none, never mind it.

I think you will agree with me that the remedy is for the moment out of the question; and our duty is to "never mind it," as the proverb says. Discouraging for literature though the prospect seems, I think that strong minds should not be frightened by it, but should try to discover whether modern English literature does not offer us some guiding examples in this relation. It certainly does. A great deal of excellent English

literature belonging to that third class which I have specified, has been created under just the same kind of disheartening circumstances. Great poetry has not been written under these conditions — that requires solitude. Great drama and great dramatic novels have never been produced under such conditions. But the literature of the essay, which is very important; the great literature of short stories; and a great deal of thoughtful work of the systematic order, such as historical or social or critical studies, — all this has been done very successfully by men who have had no time to call their own during sunlight. The literature of observation and experience, and the literature of patient research, do not require days of thought and leisure. Much of such work has been produced, for many generations in England, a little at a time, every night, before going to bed. For example, there is an eminent Englishman of letters named Morley of whom you have doubtless heard — the author of many books, and a great influence in literature, who is also one of the busiest of English lawyers and statesmen. For forty or fifty years this man had never a single hour of leisure by day. All his books were produced, a page or two at a time, late in the evening after his household had gone to sleep. It is not really so much a question of time for this class of literature as a question of perfect regu-

larity of habits. Even twenty minutes a day, or twenty minutes a night, represents a great deal in the course of a couple of years, and may be so used as to produce great results. The only thing is that this small space of time should be utilized regularly as the clock strikes — never interrupted except by unavoidable circumstances, such as sickness. To fatigue one's body, or to injure one's eyesight, by a useless strain is simply a crime. But that should not be necessary under any circumstances in good health. Nor is it necessary to waste time and effort in the production of exactly so much finished manuscript. Not at all. The work of literature should especially be a work of thinking and feeling; the end to be greatly insisted upon is the record of every experience of thought and feeling. Make the record even in pencil, in short hand, in the shape of little drawings — it matters not how, so long as the record is sufficient to keep fresh the memory when you turn to it again. I am quite sure that the man who loves literature and enjoys a normal amount of good health can make a good book within a year or two, no matter how busy he may otherwise be, if he will follow systematic rules of work.

You may ask what kind of work is good to begin with. I have no hesitation in replying, translation. Translation is the best possible preparation for original work, and translations are vastly

needed in Japan. No knowledge of Western literature can ever become really disseminated in Japan merely through the university and the school; it can be disseminated only through translations. The influence of French, or German, of Spanish, Italian, and Russian literatures upon English literature has been very largely effected through translations. Scholarship alone cannot help the formation of a new national literature. Indeed, the scholar, by the very nature of his occupation, is too apt to remain unproductive. After some work of this kind, original work should be attempted. Instinctively some Japanese scholars have been doing this very thing; they have been translating steadily. But there they have mostly stopped. Yet, really, translation should be only the first step of the literary ladder.

As to original work, I have long wanted to say to you something about the real function of literature in relation not to the public, but to the author himself. That function should be moral. Literature ought to be especially a moral exercise. When I use the word moral, please do not understand me to mean anything religious, or anything in the sense of the exact opposite of immoral. I use it here only in the meaning of self-culture — the development within us of the best and strongest qualities of heart and mind. Lit-

erature ought to be, for him that produces it, the chief pleasure and the constant consolation of life. Now, old Japanese customs recognized this fact in a certain way. I am referring to the custom of composing poetry in time of pain, in time of sorrow, in all times of mental trials, as a moral exercise. In this particular form the custom is particularly Japanese, or perhaps in origin Chinese, not Western. But I assure you that among men of letters in the West, the moral idea has been followed for hundreds of years, not only in regard to poetry, but in regard to prose. It has not been understood by Western writers in the same sharp way; it has not been taught as a rule of conduct; it has not been known except to the elect, the very best men. But the very best men have found this out; and they have always turned to literature as a moral consolation for all the troubles of life. Do you remember the story of the great Goethe, who when told of the death of his son, exclaimed "Forward, across the dead" — and went on with his work? It was not the first time that he had conquered his grief by turning his mind to composition. Almost any author of experience learns to do something of this kind. Tennyson wrote his "In Memoriam" simply as a refuge from his great grief. Among the poets about whom I lectured to you this year, there is scarcely one whose work does not yield

a record of the same thing. The lover of literature has a medicine for grief that no doctor can furnish; he can always transmute his pain into something precious and lasting. None of us in this world can expect to be very happy; the proportion of happiness to unhappiness in the average human life has been estimated as something less than one-third. No matter how healthy or strong or fortunate you may be, every one of you must expect to endure a great deal of pain; and it is worth while for you to ask yourselves whether you cannot put it to good use. For pain has a very great value to the mind that knows how to utilize it. Nay, more than this must be said; nothing great ever was written, or ever will be written, by a man who does not know pain. All great literature has its source in the rich soil of sorrow; and that is the real meaning of the famous verses of Goethe:

> Who ne'er his bread in sorrow ate,—
> Who ne'er the lonely midnight hours,
> Weeping upon his bed has sat,—
> He knows ye not, ye Heavenly powers.

Emerson has uttered very nearly the same idea with those famous verses in which he describes the moral effect upon a strong mind of the great sorrow caused by the death of the wor
loved:

Though thou loved her as thyself,
As a self of purer clay,
Though her parting dims the day,
Stealing grace from all alive —
Heartily know,
When half-gods go
The Gods arrive!

That is to say, even if you loved that woman more than yourself and thought of her as a being superior to humanity, even if with her death the whole world seemed to grow dark, and all things to become colourless, and all life to lose its charm; that grief may be good for you. It is only when the demi-gods, the half-gods, have left us, that we first become able to understand and to see the really divine. For all pain helps to make us wise, howevermuch we may hate it at the time. Of course it is only the young man who sits upon his bed at midnight and weeps; he is weak only for want of experience. The mature man will not weep, but he will turn to literature in order to compose his mind; and he will put his pain into beautiful songs or thoughts that will help to make the hearts of all who read them more tender and true.

Remember, I do not mean that a literary man should write only to try and forget his suffering. That will do very well for a beginning, for a boyish effort. But a strong man ought not to try to forget in that way. On the contrary, he should

try to think a great deal about his grief, to think of it as representing only one little drop in the great sea of the world's pain, to think about it bravely, and to put his thoughts about it into beautiful and impersonal form. Nobody should allow himself for a moment to imagine that his own particular grief, that his own private loss, that his own personal pain, can have any value in literature, except in so far as it truly represents the great pain of human life.

Above all things the literary man must not be selfish in his writing. No selfish reflection is likely to have the least value; that is why no really selfish person can ever become either a great poet or a great dramatist. To meet and to master pain, but especially to master it, is what gives strength. Men wrestle in order to become strong; and for mental strength, one must learn to wrestle with troubles of all kinds. Think of all the similes in literature that express this truth —about fire separating the gold from the rock, about stones becoming polished by striking together in the flow of a stream, about a hundred natural changes representing the violent separation or the destruction of what is superficial.

Better than any advice about methods or models, is I think the simple counsel: Whenever you are in trouble and do not know exactly what to do, sit down and write something.

Yet one more thing remains to be said, and it is not unimportant. It is this: A thing once written is not literature. The great difference between literature and everything included under the name of journalism lies in this fact. No man can produce real literature at one writing. I know that there are a great many stories about famous men sitting down to write a wonderful book at one effort, and never even correcting the manuscript afterwards. But I must tell you that the consensus of literary experience declares nearly all these stories to be palpable lies. To produce even a single sentence of good literature requires that the text be written at least three times. But for one who is beginning, three times three were not too much. And I am not speaking of poetry at all — that may have to be written over as many as fifty times before the proper effect is attained. You will perhaps think this is a contradiction of what I told you before, about the great value of writing down, even in pencil, little notes of your thoughts and feelings. But the contradiction only seems; really there is no contradiction at all. The value of the first notes is very great — greater than the value of any intermediate form. But the writer should remember that such notes represent only the outline of the foundation, the surveying and the clearing of the ground on which his literary structure is

slowly and painfully to be raised. The first notes do not express the real thought or the real feeling, no matter now carefully you try to write them. They are only signs, ideographs, helping you to remember. And you will find that to reproduce the real thought faithfully in words will require a great deal of time. I am quite sure that few of you will try to do work in this way in the beginning; you will try every other way first, and have many disappointments. Only painful experience can assure you of the necessity of doing this. For literature more than for any other art, the all-necessary thing is patience. That is especially why I cannot recommend journalism as a medium of expression to literary students — at least, not as a regular occupation. For journalism cannot wait, and the best literature must wait.

I am not sure that these suggestions can have any immediate value; I only hope that you will try to remember them. But in order to test the worth of one of them, I very much hope that somebody will try the experiment of writing one little story or narrative poem, putting it in a drawer, writing it over again, and hiding it again, month after month, for the time of one year. The work need not take more than a few minutes every day after the first writing. After the last writing at the end of the year, if you read it over

again, you will find that the difference between the first form and the last is exactly like the difference of seeing a tree a mile off, first with the naked eye, and afterwards with a very powerful telescope.

CHAPTER II

ON COMPOSITION

I

I hope to give, at least once in each term, a short lecture upon the practical part of literature and literary study. This will be, or ought to be, of much more value to you than there could be in a single lecture upon the characteristics of an author. I want to speak to you only as a practical man-of-letters, as one who has served his apprenticeship at the difficult trade of literature. Please understand that in saying this, I am saying only "I am a workman," just as a carpenter would say to you "I am a carpenter," or a smith, "I am a smith." This does not mean in any sense that I am a good workman. I might be a very bad workman, and still have the right to call myself a workman. When a carpenter tells you, "I am a carpenter," you can believe him; but that does not mean that he thinks himself a good carpenter. As for his work, you can judge of that when you find occasion to pay for it. But whether the man be a clumsy and idle workman, or be the best carpenter in town, you know that

he can tell you something which you do not know. He has learned how to handle tools, and how to choose the kind of wood best adapted to certain sorts of manufacture. He may be a cheat; he may be very careless about what he does; but it is quite certain that you could learn something from him, because he has served an apprenticeship, and knows, by constant practice of hand and eye, how a carpenter's work should be done.

So much for my position in the matter. Now I want to begin my lecture by trying to disabuse your minds of two or three common errors in regard to literary composition. I do not say that you all indulge these errors; but I think it not improbable. The first error against which I wish to warn you is the very widespread error that the making of literature — that is to say, the writing of books or poems — is a matter that you can learn through education, through the reading of books, through the mastery of theories. I am going to be absolutely frank with you, but quite heterodox notwithstanding, by telling you that education will not help you to become a poet or a story-teller any more than it could help you to become a carpenter or a blacksmith. There are accessible to you, in libraries, any number of books and treatises about different kinds of woods, about different kinds of tools, and about the industry of woodwork. You might read all

of these, and learn by heart every fact of importance that they contain; but that would not enable you to make with your own hands a good table or a good chair. So reading about writing will not teach you how to write. Literature is exactly like a trade in this sense that it can only be acquired by practice. I know that such a statement will shock certain persons of much more learning than I could ever hope to acquire. But I believe this would be entirely due to what is called educational bias. The teachers who teach that literature as a practical art has anything to do with the mere study of books, seem to forget that much of the world's greatest literature was made before there were any books, that the poems of Homer were composed before there were any schools or grammars, that the sacred books of nearly all the great civilizations were written without rules, either grammatical or other — and yet these works remain our admiration for all time.

Another error to be considered, is that the structure of your own language is of such a kind that Western rules of literary art could not be applied to it. But if there be any truth in such a belief, it is truth of a most unimportant kind. As I have told you that a knowledge of literary technicalities, grammatical or prosodical, will not teach you how to write, you will already be able

to guess how little I think of the importance to you of what are commonly called rules of composition. These foreign rules, indeed, are not applicable to your language; but they have no value whatever in the sense I mean. Let us for the time being throw all such rules overboard, and not even think about them. And now that the position is thus made clear, or at least clearer, let me say that the higher rules of literature are universal, and apply equally well to every language under the sun, no matter what its construction. For these universal rules have to do only with the truth; and truth is truth everywhere, no matter in what tongue it may be spoken. Presently we shall turn back to the subject of the universal rule — indeed it will form the principal part of this lecture.

The third error against which I wish to warn you is the foolish belief that great work, or even worthy work, can be done without pains — without very great pains. Nothing has been more productive of injury to young literary students than those stories, or legends, about great writers having written great books in a very short time. They suggest what must be in a million cases impossible, as a common possibility. You hear of Johnson having written "Rasselas" in a few weeks, or of Beckford having done a similar thing, of various other notables never correcting

their manuscript — and the youth who has much self-confidence imagines that he can do the same thing and produce literature. I do not believe those stories. I do not say exactly that they are not true; I only say that I do not believe them, and that the books, as we have them now, certainly represent much more than the work of a few weeks or even months. It is much more valuable to remember that Gray passed fourteen years in correcting and improving a single poem, and that no great poem or book, as we now have the text, represents the first form of the text. Take, for example, the poets that we have been reading. It is commonly said that Rossetti's "Blessed Damosel" was written in his nineteenth year. This is true; but we have the text of the poem as it was written in his nineteenth year, and it is unlike the poem as we now have it; for it was changed and corrected and recorrected scores of times to bring it to its present state of perfection. Almost everything composed by Tennyson was changed and changed and changed again, to such an extent that in almost every edition the text differed. Above all things do not imagine that any good work can be done without immense pains. When Dr. Max Müller told Froude, the historian, that he never corrected what he wrote, Froude immediately answered "Unless you correct a great many times, you will never be able to

write good English." Now there is good English and good English; and I am not sure that Froude was right. Froude was thinking, I believe, of literary English. Correct English can be written without correction, by dint of long practise in precise writing. Business letters and official documents and various compositions of a kindred sort must be correct English; they are written entirely according to forms and rules, exactly like legal papers in which the mistake of one word might cause unspeakable mischief. But all this has nothing to do with literature. If the art of writing good English or good French or good Japanese were literature, then the lawyers and the bank clerks would represent the highest literature of their respective countries. So far, however, as Froude meant literary English, he is absolutely right. No literature can be produced without much correction. I have told you of primitive literature composed before the time of books and of grammars, which was and is, and will long continue to be, unrivalled literature. But do you suppose that it never was corrected and changed and re-made over and over and over again? Why, most assuredly it was, and corrected not by one only but by thousands and thousands of persons who had learned it by heart. Every generation improved it a little; and at last, when it came to be written down, it had been

polished and perfected by the labour of hundreds of years.

Now I suppose all of you have at some time wanted to get books about how to write English, I suppose that you have all found them, and that the result was only disappointment. It would have been disappointment just the same if you had been looking for French books on how to write French, or German books on how to write German. No books yet exist that will teach you literary work, which will teach you the real secrets of composition. Some day, I trust, there will be such books; but at present there are none, simply because the only men capable of writing them are men who have no time to give to such work. But this having been said, let us return to the subject of Japanese composition. Before trying to give you some practical rules, let me assure you of one thing, that all your foreign studies can be of no literary use to you except in relation to your own tongue. You can not write, you will never be able to write, English literature or French literature or German literature, though you might be able, after years of practice and foreign travel, to write tolerably correct English or French or German — to write a business document, for example, or to write a simple essay dealing only with bare facts. But none of you can hope to be eloquent in any other tongue than

your own, or to move the hearts of people by writing in a language which is not your own. There are very few examples in all English literature of a man able to write equally well in two languages — in French and in English for example, close as are these tongues to each other. With an oriental language for a mother tongue, the only hope of being able to create a literature in a foreign language is in totally forgetting your own. But the result would not be worth the sacrifice.

I suppose that many of you will become authors, either by accident or by inclination; and if you produce literature, prose or verse, it is to be hoped that you will influence the future literature of your country, by infusing into the work those new ideas which a university course must have forced upon you by thousands. But this alone, this imparting of new ideas, of larger knowledge, would not be literature. Literature is not scholarship, though it may contain scholarship. Literature means, as I have said before, the highest possible appeal of language to the higher emotions and the nobler sentiments. It is not learning, nor can it be made by any rules of learning.

And now we can turn to the practical side of the subject.

I begin by asking you to remember that the

principles of literary composition of the highest class must be exactly the same for Japan or for France or for England or for any other country. These principles are of two kinds, elimination and addition — in other words, a taking away or getting rid of the unnecessary, and the continual strengthening of the necessary. Besides this, composition means very little indeed. The first thing needed, of course, is a perfect knowledge of your own tongue as spoken; I will not say as written, for a perfect knowledge of any tongue as written is possible only to scholarship, and is not at all essential to literature. But a knowledge of the living speech, in all its forms, high and low, common and uncommon, is very desirable. If one can not hope to obtain the knowledge of the whole spoken speech, then I should advise him to throw his strength into the study of a part only, the part that is most natural to him. Even with this partial knowledge excellent literature is possible. But full knowledge will produce larger results in the case of large talent.

II

In all this lecture you must not forget my definition of literature as an art of emotional expression. And the first thing to be considered is

the emotion itself, its value, its fugitive subtlety, and the extreme difficulty of "getting hold of it."

You might ask why I put the emotion before the sensation. Of course the sensation always precedes the emotion. The sensation means the first impression received from the senses, or the revival in memory of such an impression. The emotion is the feeling, very complex, that follows the sensation or impression. Do not forget this distinction; for it is very important indeed.

Now the reason why I am not going to say much to you about the sensation, is that if a sensation could be accurately described in words, the result would be something like a photograph, nothing more. You might say, a coloured photograph; and it is true that if we discover (as we shall certainly some day discover) the art of photographing in colours, such a coloured photograph would represent almost exactly a visual impression. But this would not be art. A photograph is not art; and the nearer that a painting resembles a photograph by its accuracy, the less it is likely to be worth much from the artistic point of view. To describe sensations would be no more literature in the higher sense, than a photograph could be called art in the higher sense. I shall therefore boldly take the position that literature is not a picture of sensations, but of emotions.

All this must be very fully illustrated. When I say " emotion " you perhaps think of tears, sorrow, regret. But this would be a mistake. Let us begin by considering the very simplest kind of emotion — the emotion of a tree.

Two things happen when you look at a tree. First you have the picture of the tree reflected upon the brain through the medium of sight — that is to say, a little card picture, a little photograph of the tree. But even if you wanted to paint this image with words you could not do it; and if you could do it, the result would not be worth talking about. But almost as quickly, you receive a second impression, very different from the first. You observe that the tree gives you a peculiar feeling of some kind. The tree has a certain character, and this perception of the character of the tree, is the feeling or the emotion of the tree. That is what the artist looks for; and that is what the poet looks for.

But we must explain this a little more. Every object, animate or inanimate, causes a certain feeling within the person who observes it. Everything has a face. Whenever you meet a person for the first time, and look at the face of that person, you receive an impression that is immediately followed by some kind of feeling. Either you like the face, or you dislike it, or it leaves in you a state of comparative indifference. We all

know this in regard to faces; but only the artist and poet know it in regard to things. And the difference between the great artist and the great poet and the rest of the world is only that the artist or the poet perceives the face of things, what is called the physiognomy of things — that is to say, their character. A tree, a mountain, a house, even a stone has a face and a character for the artistic eye. And we can train ourselves to see that character by pursuing the proper methods.

Now suppose that I were to ask all of you to describe for me a certain tree in the garden of the University. I should expect that a majority among you would write very nearly the same thing. But would this be a proof that the tree had given to all of you the same kind of feeling? No, it would not mean anything of the sort. It would mean only that a majority among you had acquired habits of thinking and writing which are contrary to the principles of art. Most of you would describe the tree in nearly the same way, because, in the course of years of study, your minds have been filled with those forms of language commonly used to describe trees; you would remember the words of some famous poet or story-teller, and would use them as expressing your own feelings. But it is perfectly certain that they would not express your own feelings. Education usually teaches us to use the ideas and the

language of other men to describe our own feelings, and this habit is exactly contrary to every principle of art.

Now suppose there is one among you of a remarkably powerful talent of the poetical and artistic kind. His description of the tree would be startlingly different from that of the rest of you; it would surprise you all, so that you would have to look at the tree again in order to see whether the description was true. Then you would be still more astonished to find that it was much more true than any other; and then you would not only discover that he had enabled you to understand the tree in a new way, but also that the rest of you had but half seen it, and that your descriptions were all wrong. He would not have used the words of other men to describe the tree; he would have used his own, and they would be very simple words indeed, like the words of a child.

For the child is incomparably superior to the average man in seeing the character of things; and the artist sees like the child. If I were to ask twenty little children — say, five or six years old — to look at the same tree that we were talking about, and to tell me what they think of it, I am sure that many of them would say wonderful things. They would come much nearer to the truth than the average university student, and this

just because of their absolute innocence. To the child's imagination everything is alive — stones, trees, plants, even household objects. For him everything has a soul. He sees things quite differently from the man. Nor is this the only reason for the superiority of the child's powers of observation. His instinctive knowledge, the knowledge inherited from millions of past lives, is still fresh, not dulled by the weight of the myriad impressions of education and personal experience. Ask a child, for example, what he thinks of a certain stranger. He will look and say "I like him," or "I dislike him." Should you ask, "Why do you dislike that man?" the child, after some difficulty, will tell you that he does not like something in his face. Press the little fellow further to explain, and after a long and painful effort he will suddenly come out with a comparison of startling truth that will surprise you, showing that he has perceived something in the face that you did not see. This same instinctive power is the real power of the artist, and it is the power that distinguishes literature from mere writing. You will now better understand what I meant by saying that education will not teach a person how to make poetry, any more than a reading of books could teach a man how to make a table or a chair. The faculty of artistic seeing is independent of education, and must be culti-

vated outside of education. Education has not made great writers. On the contrary, they have become great in spite of education. For the effect of education is necessarily to deaden and dull those primitive and instinctive feelings upon which the higher phases of emotional art depend. Knowledge can only be gained in most cases at the expense of certain very precious natural faculties. The man who is able to keep the freshness of the child in his mind and heart, notwithstanding all the knowledge that he absorbs, that is the man who is likely to perform great things in literature.

Now we have clearly defined what I mean by the feeling or emotion which the artist in literature must seek to catch and express. We took the simplest example possible, a tree. But everything, and every fancy, and every being to be treated of in literature must be considered in precisely the same way. In all cases the object of the writer should be to seize and fix the character of the thing, and he can do this only by expressing the exact feeling that the thing has produced in his mind. This is the main work of literature. It is very difficult. But why it is difficult we have not yet considered.

What happens when the feeling comes? You feel then a momentary thrill of pleasure or pain or fear or wonder; but this thrill passes away al-

most as suddenly as it comes. You can not write it down as fast as it vanishes. You are left then only with the sensation or first impression of the thing in your mind, and a mere memory of the feeling. In different natures the feeling is different, and it lasts longer in some than in others; but in all cases it passes away as rapidly as smoke, or perfume blown by a wind. If you think that anybody can put down on paper this feeling exactly as it is received, immediately upon receiving it, you are much mistaken. This can be accomplished only by arduous labour. The labour is to revive the feeling.

At first you will be exactly in the condition of a person trying to remember a dream after waking up. All of us know how difficult it is to remember a dream. But by the help of the sensation, which was received during sleep, the feeling may be revived. My recommendation would be in such a case to write down immediately, as fully as you can, the circumstances and the cause of the emotion, and to try to describe the feeling as far as possible. It makes no difference then whether you write at all grammatically, nor whether you finish your sentences, nor whether you write backwards or forwards. The all-essential thing is to have notes of the experience. These notes should be the seed from which the plant will be made to grow and to blossom.

Reading over these quick notes, you will perceive that the feeling is faintly revived by them, especially by certain parts of them. But of course, except to you, the notes would still be of no possible value. The next work is to develop the notes, to arrange them in their natural order, and to construct the sentences in a correct way. While doing this you will find that a number of things come back to your mind which you had forgotten while making the notes. The development of the notes is likely to be four or five times longer, perhaps even ten times longer, than were the notes themselves. But now, reading over the new writing, you find that the feeling is not revived by it; the feeling has entirely vanished, and what you have written is likely to seem commonplace enough. A third writing you will find to better both the language and the thought, but perhaps the feeling does not revive. A fourth and a fifth writing will involve an astonishing number of changes. For while engaged in this tiresome work, you are sure to find that a number of things which you have already written are not necessary, and you will also find that the most important things remaining have not been properly developed at all. While you are doing the work over again, new thoughts come; the whole thing changes shape, begins to be more compact, more strong and simple; and at last, to your delight, the

feeling revives — nay, revives more strongly than at first, being enriched by new psychological relations. You will be surprised at the beauty of what you have done; but you must not trust the feeling then. Instead of immediately printing the thing, I should advise you to put it into a drawer, and leave it there for at least a month, without looking at it again. When you re-read it after this interval, you are certain to find that you can perfect it a great deal more. After one or two further remodellings it will be perhaps the very best that you can do, and will give to others the same emotion that you yourself felt on first perceiving the fact or the object. The process is very much like that of focusing with a telescope. You know that you must pull the tubing out a little further, or push it in a little further, and then pull it again and then push it again many times before you can get the sharpest possible view of a distant object. Well, the literary artist has to do with language what the sight-seer must do with a telescope. And this is the first thing essential in any kind of literary composition. It is drudgery, I know; but there is no escape from it. Neither Tennyson, nor Rossetti, nor anybody else of great importance in English literature has been able to escape from it within our own day. Long practice will not lighten this labour in the least. Your methods may become

incomparably more skilful; but the actual volume of work will always be about the same.

I imagine that some of you might ask: "Is there no other way of expressing emotion or sentiment than that which you have been trying to describe to us? You say that the highest literature is emotional expression; but there is nothing more difficult than the work you have suggested; is there no other way?"

Yes, there is another way, and a way which I sometimes imagine is more in harmony with the character of the Japanese genius, and perhaps with the character of the Japanese language. But it is just as difficult; and it has this further disadvantage that it requires immense experience, as well as a very special talent. It is what has been called the impersonal method, though I am not sure that this title is a good one. Very few great writers have been able to succeed at it; and I think that these few have mostly been Frenchmen. And it is a method suitable only for prose.

An emotion may be either expressed or suggested. If it is difficult to express, it is at least quite as difficult to suggest; but if you can suggest it, the suggestion is apt to be even more powerful than the expression, because it leaves much more to the imagination. Of course you must remember that all literary art must be partly suggestive—do not forget that. But by the imper-

sonal method, as it has been called, it becomes altogether suggestive. There is no expression of emotion by the writer at all — that is to say, by the narrator. Nevertheless the emotion comes as you read, and comes with extraordinary power. There is only one very great writer of our own times who succeeded perfectly by this method — that was Guy de Maupassant.

A number of facts may be related, quite dispassionately and plainly, in such a manner as to arouse very great feeling; or a conversation may be so reported as to convey to the mind the exact feelings of the speakers, and even to suggest every look or action without any description at all. But you will see at once that the great difficulty here lies not so much in the choice of the word values (although that also is indispensable) as in the choice of facts. You must become a perfect judge of the literary worth — I mean the emotional value — of the simplest fact in itself. Now a man who can make such judgments must have had a vast experience of life. He must have the dramatic faculty greatly developed. He must know the conversational peculiarities of the language of all classes. He must be able to group men and women by types. And I doubt very much whether any person can do this while he is young. In most cases the talent and capacity for it can develop only in middle life, be-

cause it is only by that time that a person could have the proper experience. Therefore I could not recommend an attempt to follow this method at the beginning of a literary career, though I should strongly recommend every conceivable cultivation of the powers which may render it possible. Remember that in addition to experience it requires a natural faculty of perception as vivid as that of a painter. I have mentioned one name only in relation to this kind of work, but I should also call your attention to such stories as those of Prosper Mérimée — "Carmen," "Matteo Falcone." Occasionally you will find stories by Daudet, especially the little stories of the war between France and Germany, showing the method in question. But in these the style is usually somewhat fixed; there is some description attempted, showing a personal feeling. In the best work of Maupassant and of Mérimée, the personal element entirely disappears. There is no description, except in some conversational passages put into the mouth of another person; there are only facts, but they are facts that "take you by the throat," to use a familiar expression.

I am sure that you are not yet quite satisfied by these definitions, or attempts at definitions, of the two working methods. I suppose that there are among you some good writers capable of writing in a few weeks, or even in a few days, a story

which if published in a Japanese periodical, would please thousands of readers, and would bring tears perhaps to many eyes. I do not doubt your powers to please the public, to excite their emotions, to strengthen their best sentiments; and I have said that it is the office of literature to do this. But if you ask me whether I would call this work literature, I should answer "No; that is journalism. It is work which has been quickly, and therefore imperfectly, done. It is only the ore of literature; it is not literature in the true sense." But you will say, "The public calls it literature, accepts it as literature, pays for it as literature — what more do you want?"

I can best explain by an illustration. Next to the Greeks, the Arabs were perhaps the most skilful of poets and artists in describing beauty in words. Every part of the body had a beauty of a special kind; and this special beauty had a special name. Furthermore all beauty was classified, ranked. If a woman belonged to the first rank of beauty, she was called by a particular name, signifying that when you saw her the first time you were startled, and that every time that you looked at her again after that, she seemed to become more and more and more beautiful until you doubted the reality of your own senses. A woman who belonged only to the second class of beauty would charm you quite as much the first

time that you saw her; but after that, when you looked at her again you would find that she was not so beautiful as you had thought at first. As for women of the third, fourth, fifth, sixth and seventh classes of beauty, it is only necessary to say that the same rule held good; more and more defects would show themselves, according to the class, upon familiarity. Now the difference between cheap emotional literature of the journalistic sort and true literature, is exactly of the same kind. Cheap literature pays best for the time being, and great literature scarcely pays at all. But a great story written by a master seems more and more beautiful every time that you read it over again; and through generations and centuries it seems to be more and more beautiful to those who read it. But cheap literature, although it pleases even more the first time that it was read, shows defects upon a second reading, and more defects upon a third reading, and still more upon a fourth reading, until the appearance of the defects spoils all the pleasure of the reader, and he throws away the book or the story in disgust. So do the public act in the long run. What pleases them today they throw away tomorrow; and they are right in throwing it away, because it does not represent careful work.

One more general observation may be made, though you should remember that all general

statements involve exceptions. But bearing this in mind, it is not too much to say that what are called classics in any language are classics because they represent perfect workmanship, and that books which are not classics usually represent imperfect workmanship.

III

The next subject to consider will be construction — that is to say, the architecture of the composition, the first rules for putting the thing together.

The most common difficulty of literary work is how to begin. Everybody, all over the world, is troubled just this way. A boy is, to whom you give a subject and tell him to write about it. How shall I begin? The greatest poets, the greatest essayists, the greatest dramatists are not all superior to this weakness. They all have to ask themselves the same question at times. The beginning is the difficulty. But the experienced learn how to avoid it. I believe that most of them avoid the trouble of beginning by very simple means.

What means?

By not beginning at all.

This may require a little explanation. In the

old days there were rules for beginning, just as there were rules for everything else. Literature was subjected to the same imposition of rhetoric as were other compositions. We shall have more to say about this when we come to the subject of style. In history, in the critical essay, above all in philosophy, a beginning is very necessary. Scope and plan must be determined beforehand. You must know what you want to say, and how you intend to say it, and how much space will be required for saying it. Serious and solid work of the purely intellectual kind must be done according to a fixed and logical method. I am sure that I need not explain why. But it is quite otherwise in regard to poetry and other forms of emotional and imaginative literature. The poet or the story-teller never gets the whole of his inspiration at once; it comes to him only by degrees, while he is perfecting the work. His first inspiration is only a sudden flash of emotion, or the sudden shock of a new idea, which at once awakens and sets into motion many confused trains of other interrelated emotions and ideas. It ought to be obvious, therefore, that the first inspiration might represent not the beginning of anything, but the middle of it, or the end.

I was startled some years ago in Kyoto while watching a Japanese artist drawing horses. He drew the horses very well; but he always began at

the tail. Now it is the western rule to begin at the head of the horse; that is why I was surprised. But upon reflection, it struck me that it could not really make any difference whether the artist begins at the head or the tail or the belly or the foot of the horse, if he really knows his business. And most great artists who really know their business do not follow other people's rules. They make their own rules. Every one of them does his work in a way peculiar to himself; and the peculiarity means only that he finds it more easy to work in that way. Now the very same thing is true in literature. And the question, "How shall I begin?" only means that you want to begin at the head instead of beginning at the tail or somewhere else. That is, you are not yet experienced enough to trust to your own powers. When you become more experienced you will never ask the question; and I think that you will often begin at the tail — that is to say, you will write the end of the story before you have even thought of the beginning.

The working rule is this: Develop the first idea or emotion that comes to you before you allow yourself to think about the second. The second will suggest itself, even too much, while you are working at the first. If two or three or four valuable emotions or ideas come to you about the same time, take the most vigorous of

them, or the one that most attracts you to begin with, unless it happens to be also the most difficult. For the greater number of young writers I should say, follow the line of least resistance, and take the easiest work first. It does not matter at all whether it is to belong to the middle or to the end or to the beginning of a story or poem. By developing the different parts or verses separately from each other, you will soon discover this astonishing fact, that they have a tendency to grow together of themselves, and into a form different from that which you first intended, but much better. This is the inspiration of form as construction. And if you try always to begin at the beginning, you are very likely to miss this inspiration. The literary law is, let the poem or the story shape itself. Do not try to shape it before it is nearly done. The most wonderful work is not the work that the author shapes and plans; it is the work that shapes itself, the work that obliges him, when it is nearly done, to change it all from beginning to end, and to give it a construction which he had never imagined at the time of beginning it.

You will see that these rules, results of practical experience, and perfectly well known to men of letters in every country of Europe, are exactly the opposite of the rules taught in schools and universities. The student is always told how to

begin, and always puzzles himself about a beginning. But the men who make literature, the poets, the great story-tellers of the highest rank — they never begin. At least, they never begin at the beginning according to rule; they draw their horses from the hoof or the tail much more often than from the head.

That is all that I have to say about construction. You may think this is very little. I reply that it is quite enough. Instinct and habit will teach all the rest; and they are better masters than all grammarians and rhetoricians. What a man cannot learn by literary instinct, and cannot acquire by literary habit, he will never, never be able to obtain from rules or books. I am afraid that some of these opinions may seem very heretical, but I must now be guilty of a much greater heresy, when I introduce you to my ideas about style. I think — in fact I feel quite sure — that everything which has been written upon the subject of style is absolute nonsense, because it mistakes results for causes. I hold that such writing has done immense injury to the literary student in every part of the world; and I propose to prove to you that there is no such thing as style.

IV

I suppose you will ask me, " Why do you talk to us about the styles of Macaulay and Burke and Ruskin, if you do not believe that there is such a thing as style? " I will answer that it is my duty in lectures to explain as far as I can the reasons why different writers are valued; and in order to do this I must use the word " style " because it is customary, and because it indicates something. But the general notion attaching to that something is wrong. What was called " style " no longer exists. What is called " style " ought to be called something else — I should say " character."

If you look at the dictionary you will find various definitions of the word " style," but all these can be reduced to two. The first, or general style, is simply rhetorical; it means the construction of sentences according to a complete set of rules, governing the form and proportion of every part of the sentence. This once was style. There was a time when everybody was supposed to write according to the same rules, and in almost exactly the same way. We might expect that work done by different individuals according to such rules would be all very much alike; and as a matter of fact, there was a great likeness in the styles of

French and English writers during the time that classical rules of composition were in force. I suppose you know that by classical I mean rules obtained from study of the Greek and Latin writers. The effort of Western men of letters during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries was to imitate the old classics. So they had rules and measures for everything, for every part of a sentence, and for the position of every word. Therefore the styles did greatly resemble each other. In France the similarity I refer to was greater than in England, the French being a more perfect language, and much closer to Latin than English. For example, you would find it very hard to distinguish the style of a story written by Diderot from the style of a story written by Voltaire. The Encyclopedists, as they are called, wrote very much after the same fashion. But a fine critic could detect differences, nevertheless. For no matter how exact the rules might be, the way of obeying them would differ according to differences of character, mental character; I need scarcely tell you that no two minds think and feel in exactly the same way. These differences of individual thinking and feeling necessarily give a slightly different tone to the work of each writer, even in the most rigid period of classical style. And this difference of tone is what we call style today — after the old classical rules have

been given up. But there is still much popular error upon the subject of individual style. People think still with the ideas of the eighteenth century. They think that there are rules for individual style, because there are rules for classical style. They think that when we talk of the style of Macaulay or Froude, of Arnold or of De Quincey, we mean certain rules of composition by which the literary method of one man can be known from that of another. I should like to see any man living attempt to define these rules. The authors themselves could not define them. There are no such rules. This is altogether an error — and a very serious error. The differences are not due to any definable rules at all; they are due entirely to individual differences of character. And therefore I say that style, in the modern meaning of the word, is character.

This remains to be proved. Let us see what any author's style means today. It means that his method of constructing sentences differs appreciably from the method in which other men construct their sentences. And how is the difference shown? Chiefly in three ways:

1. By a certain metrical form of sentence peculiar to the writer.

2. By a certain quality of sound — sonority — in the sentence, not due merely to measure, but to a sense of the musical value of words.

3. By choice of words giving particular impressions of force or colour.

Now how can we define and illustrate these three peculiarities in any writer? I say that it cannot be done. One might, as Mr. Saintsbury did, take some sentences from the Bible, or from any volume of rich prose, and arrange the sentences so as to show their measure and accent, by the same means that the accent and measure of poetry can be shown. But even thus the cadences could not be shown. In order to show the cadence we should have to adopt the suggestion of a very clever American man-of-letters, Sidney Lanier, and set the sentence to music — I mean write it with a musical notation above every word, in addition to the use of accents and feet. So much might be done. But there would still remain the impossible task of defining an author's conception of word values. Words are very much like lizards; they change colour according to position. Two different writers using the same word to express the same idea can give to that word two entirely different characters, for much depends upon the place of the word in the sentence, or, in simpler language, upon the combination to which it belongs. And all this work is more or less unconscious on the author's part. He chooses not by rule, but by feeling, by what is called the literary instinct. Attempts have

been made to define differences of this kind as exhibited in the styles of different authors by counting and classifying the verbs and adjectives and adverbs used by each. These attempts resulted in nothing at all. The same thing has been tried in regard to poetry. How many times Tennyson uses the adjective "red" and how many times Swinburne uses the adjective "red" may be interesting to know; but it will not help us in the least to understand why the value of the same adjective as Tennyson uses it is quite different from the value it obtains as used by Swinburne. All such differences must be due to psychological differences; therefore again I say that style is character.

And here let me utter a word of warning as to the uselessness of trying to study "style" in modern English authors. I have often been asked by students whom they should read for the study of style — and other questions of that kind, showing that they did not understand what style really is. I must even venture to say that no Japanese student who has not spent a great many years away from Japan, can possibly understand differences of foreign style. The reason must be obvious. To appreciate differences of style in foreign authors, you must have an absolutely perfect knowledge of the foreign language; you must know all its capacities of

rhythm, accent, sonority, and colour. You must know the comparative values of one hundred thousand words — and that for you is impossible. Therefore, so far as foreign literature is concerned, do not trouble yourselves trying to understand anything about style which does not depend upon old forms of rhetoric. And even if you should learn enough of the old rules to understand all the rules and sub-rules for the construction of an eighteenth century sentence, the want of training in Greek and Latin would make that knowledge almost useless to you. Style can be studied by you only in a very vague way. But I hold that way to be the most important, because it means character. What I have just said is, of course, a digression, because it is of Japanese and not of English composition that I am now going to speak.

Here you must recognize that I am sadly hampered by my absolute ignorance of the Japanese language. There are many things that I should like to talk to you about which it is out of my power to talk of for this reason. But there are general facts, independent of differences of language; and I believe that by keeping to those I shall not speak altogether in vain. In Japanese, or in any other language, the style of the writer ought to represent character, if any style, except a purely conventional one, be possible. And now

what I want to say is this: If any writer does his best to perfect his work, the result of the pains that he takes will be style in the true sense. That is, his work will have an individuality, a character about it, differentiating it from all other work on the same subject. It will be recognizably his, just as much as his face or his way of talking belongs to him and not to anybody else. But just in the same degree to which he does not take pains there will be less evidence of character, therefore less style. The work of many clumsy people will be found to have a general family resemblance. The work of the truly energetic and painstaking will be found to differ prodigiously. The greater the earnestness and the labour, the more marked the style. And now you will see what I am coming at — that style is the outcome of character developed through hard work. Style is nothing else than that in any country.

Here observe another fact. In the general history of literature, wherever we find a uniformity of style, we find no progress, and no very great literary achievements. The classic period of the English eighteenth century is an example. But the reverse is the case when general style disappears and individual style develops. That means high development, originality, new ideas, everything that signifies literary progress. Now one bad sign in the English literature of the close of

the present century — that is, the English literature of today — is that style has almost disappeared. There is a general style again, as there was in the first part of the eighteenth century. Out of a hundred English novels published this month, you would scarcely be able to tell the difference between one author's writing and another's. The great stylists are dead, except Ruskin, and he has ceased to write. The world of fiction is again governed by a set of rules which everybody follows; and novel writing, as well as essay writing (with rare exceptions), has become a trade instead of an art. Therefore nothing great appears, and nothing great is likely to appear until a reaction sets in. There is of course the extraordinary genius of Kipling, who keeps aloof from all conventions, and has made new styles of his own in almost every department of pure literature. But there is no other to place beside him, and he probably owes his development quite as much to the fact that he was born in India as to his really astonishing talent.

And this brings me to the last section of this lecture — the subject of language. One fact of Kipling's work, and not the least striking fact, is the astonishing use which he has made of the language of the people. Although a consummate master of serious and dignified style when he pleases to be, he never hesitates to speak the

speech of the streets when he finds that it serves his purpose better. Well, remember that Emerson once said, "The speech of the street is incomparably more forceful than the speech of the academy."

V

I now hope that you will have a little patience with me, as I am going to speak against conventions. I believe that Japanese literature is still to a great extent in its classic state, that it has not yet freed itself from the conventions of other centuries, and that the full capacities of the language are not expressed in its modern productions. I believe that to write in the vernacular, the every day speech of conversation and of the people, is still considered vulgar. And I must venture to express the hope that you will eventually fight boldly against these convictions. I think that it is absolutely essential. I do not believe that any new Japanese literature can come into existence, and influence life and thought and national characatic, and create for Japan what she very much needs, literary sympathy, until Japan has authors who will not be afraid to write in the true tongue of the people. One thing is certain, that the change must come. Whoever helps it to come

will be doing his country an inestimable service, for so long as literature is shaped only to the understanding of a special class of educated persons, it cannot influence the nation at all. The educated classes of any country represent but a very small portion of the great whole. They must be the teachers; yet they can not teach in the language of the academy. They must teach in the language of the people, just as Wycliffe, and Chaucer, and other great Englishmen of letters once found it necessary to do in order to create a new public opinion. Japan will certainly need a new popular literature; and although you may say that a certain class of popular literature is furnished by a certain class of writers, I would answer that a great popular literature cannot be furnished by uneducated persons, or by persons without a large range of knowledge; it must be furnished by scholars, or at least by men of taste, who are willing to speak to the masses in their mother tongue, and who care to touch the hearts of the millions. This is the true object of literature in any country. And so far as literary expression is power, think of what is lost by allowing that power to be cramped in the same way that English literature was cramped a hundred years ago. Here is a man who can delight ten or twenty thousand readers of culture, but who can not be more than a name to the nation at

large. Here is another man who can speak to forty millions of people at once, making himself equally well understood by the minister in his office and by the peasant in his rice-field. Who is the greatest force? Who is able to do most for the future of his country? Who represents the greatest power? Certainly it is not the man who pleases only twenty thousand people. It is the man who, like the young English poet already mentioned, can speak to all his countrymen in the world at the same time, and with such power that everybody both feels and understands. Recently when the Russian emperor proposed disarmament of the European powers, our young poet sent to the London *Times* a little poem about a bear — a treacherous bear. There is no part of the English speaking world in which the poem was not read; and I am quite sure that it had much more effect on English public opinion than the message of the Emperor of Russia. That is power. The man who can speak to a hundred millions of people may be stronger than a king. But he must not speak in the language of the academy.

CHAPTER III

STUDIES OF EXTRAORDINARY PROSE

I

THE ART OF SIMPLE POWER: THE NORSE WRITERS

In speaking upon the various arts of prose, I do not intend to confine the study especially to something in English literature. For it happens that we can get better examples of the great art of prose writing in other literatures than English, — examples, too, which will better appeal to the Japanese student, especially as some of them bear resemblance to the best work of the old Japanese writers. In English literature it is not very easy to find examples of that simplicity, combined with great vividness, which is to be found in the old Japanese narrative. But we can find this very often in the work of the Norse writers; and their finest pages, translated into the kindred English tongue, do not lose the extraordinary charm of the original.

Now there are two ways of writing artistic prose (of course there are many different methods, but all can be grouped under two heads),

both depending a good deal upon the character of the writer. There is a kind of work of which the merit is altogether due to vivid and powerful senses, well trained in observation. The man who sees keenly and hears keenly, who has been well disciplined how to use his eyes and ears both with quickness and caution, who has been taught by experience the value of accuracy and the danger of exaggeration (exaggeration being, after all, only an incorrect way of observing and thinking),— such a man, if he can write at all, is apt to write interestingly. The very best examples of strong simple prose are pages written by the old Norsemen who passed most of their lives in fighting and hunting. We have here the result of that training which I have above indicated. The man who knows that at any hour of the day a mistake may cost his life and the lives of his children, is apt to be a man of exact observation. He is also apt to be a man with excellent senses and good judgment; for the near-sighted or deaf or stupid could scarcely have existed in the sort of society to which the Norse writers belonged. And I imagine, so far as it is in my power to judge, that some of the old Japanese writers have given in their work evidence of the same faculties of perception and discrimination. Today we have some living examples of European writers whose power depends entirely upon the same

qualities. Modern writers of this kind are much less simple, it is true, than the writers whom we are about to consider; they have been educated in modern technical schools or universities, and their education has given to their work a certain colour never to be found in the ancient literature. But one or two writers have preserved in a most extraordinary way the best qualities of the old Norse writers,— modern Norsemen, or at least Scandinavians. I think that perhaps the best is Björnstjerne Björnson. We shall have occasion to speak of him again at another time.

The other method of writing artistic prose is more particularly subjective; it depends chiefly upon the man's inner sense of beauty,— upon his power to feel emotionally, and to express the emotion by a careful choice of words. Upon this phase of prose writing we need not now dwell; we shall take it up later on. Suffice to say that it does not at all depend upon the possession of well developed exterior senses, nor upon faculties of quick perception and discrimination; indeed, some of its greatest masters have been physically imperfect men, or helpless invalids.

Now let us take an example of the old Norse style of narrative. It dates back to the early part of the thirteenth century; and the subject is a fight in a little island on the coast of Iceland. There was trouble at the time about a Christian

bishop called Gudmund, who had been sent out there. Some determined to kill him, others resolved to stand by him,— and among the latter were two brave friends, Eyjolf and Aron. The summary opens at the point where the bishop's party had been badly handled, and nearly everybody killed except the two friends. Aron, who was the weaker of the two, wanted to stay on the ground and fight until he died. Eyjolf was determined that he should not, so he played a trick upon him in order to save him. The whole story is told in the Sturlunga Saga. I hope you will be interested by this; because it seems to me remarkably like some incidents in old Japanese histories.

Eyjolf took his way to the place where Aron and Sturla had met, and there he found Aron sitting with his weapons, and all about were lying dead men, and wounded. Eyjolf asks his cousin whether he can move at all. Aron says that he can, and stands on his feet; and now they both go together for a while by the shore, till they come to a hidden bay; — there they saw a boat ready floating, with five or six men at the oars, and the bow to sea. This was Eyjolf's arrangement, in case of sudden need. Now Eyjolf tells Aron that he means the boat for both of them, giving out that he sees no hope of doing more for the Bishop at that time.

"But I look for better days to come," says Eyjolf.

"It seems a strange plan to me," says Aron; "for I thought that we should never part from Bishop Gudmund in this distress. There is something behind this, and I

vow that I will not go, unless you go first on board."

"That I will not, Cousin," says Eyjolf, "for it is shoal water here, and I will not have any of the oarsmen leave his oar to shove her off; and it is far too much for you to go about with wounds like yours. You will have to go on board."

"Well, put your weapons in the boat," says Aron, "and I will believe you."

Aron now goes on board, and Eyjolf did as Aron asked him. Eyjolf waded after, pushing the boat, for the shallows went far out. And when he saw the right time come, Eyjolf caught up a battle-axe out of the stern of the boat, and gave a shove to the boat with all his might.

"Good-bye, Aron," says Eyjolf; "we shall meet again when God pleases."

And since Aron was disabled with wounds and weary with loss of blood, it had to be even so; and this parting was a grief to Aron, for they saw each other no more.

Now Eyjolf spoke to the oarsmen, and told them to row hard, and not let Aron come back again to Grimsey that day, and not for many a day, if they could help it.

They row away with Aron in their boat; but Eyjolf turns to the shore again, and to a boat-house with a large ferry-boat in it that belonged to the goodman (farmer) Gnup. And at the same nick of time he sees the Sturlung company come tearing down from the garth, having finished their mischief there. Eyjolf takes to the boat-house, with his mind made up to defend it, as long as his doom would let him. There were double doors to the boat-house, and he puts heavy stones against them.

Brand, one of Siglwat's followers, a man of good condition, caught a glimpse of a man moving, and said to his companions that he thought he had made out Eyjolf Karrson there, and that they ought to go after him. Sturla was not on the spot. There were nine to ten

together. So they come to the boat-house. Brand asks who is there, and Eyjolf says that it is he.

"Then you will please to come out, and come before Sturla," says Brand.

"Will you promise me grace?" says Eyjolf.

"There will be little of that," says Brand.

"Then it is for you to come on," says Eyjolf, "and for me to guard, and it seems to me the shares are ill divided."

Eyjolf had a coat of mail, and a great axe, and that was all.

Now they came at him, and he made a good and brave defence; he cut their pike-shafts through — there were stout blows on both sides. And in that bout Eyjolf broke his axe-shaft, and caught up an oar, and then another, and both broke with his blows. And in the bout Eyjolf got a thrust under his arm, and it came home. Some say that he broke the shaft from the spearhead, and let it stay in the wound. He saw now that his defence was ended. Then he made a dash out, and got through them, before they knew. They were not expecting this; still, they kept their heads, and a man named Mar cut at him and caught his ankle, so that his foot hung crippled. With that he rolled down the beach and the sea was at the flood. In such plight as he was in, Eyjolf set to and swam, and swimming he came twelve fathoms from shore to a shelf of rock, and knelt there; and then he fell full length upon the earth, and spread his hands from him, turning to the East, as if to pray.

Now they launched the boat and went after him. And when they came to the rock, a man drove a spearhead into him, and then another; but no blood flowed from either wound. So they turned to go ashore and find Sturla, and tell him the story plainly how it had all fallen out. Sturla held, and another man too, that this

had been a glorious defence. He showed that he was pleased at the news.

Now, do you observe anything peculiar about this very human document? I think you must appreciate the power of it; but I doubt whether you have noticed how very differently from modern methods that power has been employed.

In the first place, notice that there are scarcely any adjectives; altogether there are nine or ten — suppose we say ten. There are two and a half pages of about three hundred words in a page, in the extract which you have written. That is to say, there are about seven hundred and fifty words, and there are only ten adjectives in the whole — or about one adjective and a fraction to every hundred words. I think that you would have to look through thousands and thousands of modern English books before you could find anything like this. And there is no word used which could be left out, without somewhat spoiling the effect. This may not be grace; but it is certainly the economy of force, which is the basis of all grace.

Next, observe that there is no description — not a particle of description. Houses are mentioned and rocks and boats, and a fight is narrated in the most masterly way; yet nothing is described. And nevertheless how well we see everything — that cold bay of the North Sea with

the boat floating upon it, and the brave man helping his wounded cousin on board, and the unequal struggle at the boat-house, during which we can actually hear the noise of the oars breaking. There is no picture of a face; yet I am quite sure that you can see the face of that brave man in every episode of the struggle. The Norse people were perhaps not the first to discover that description was unnecessary in great writing. They loved it in their poetry; they avoided it in their prose. But it requires no little skill to neglect description in this way,— to make the actions and incidents themselves create the picture. At first reading this might seem to you simple as a schoolboy's composition; but there is nothing in the world so hard to do.

Thirdly, observe that there is no emotion, no partiality, no sympathy expressed. It is true that in one place Eyjolf is spoken of as having made "a good and brave defence," but the Norsemen never spoke badly of their enemies; and if their greatest enemy could fight well, they gave him credit for it, not as a matter of sympathy but as a matter of truth. Certainly the end of the narration shows us that the adjectives "good" and "brave" do not imply any sympathy at all; for the lord of the men who killed Eyjolf was pleased to hear of the strong fight that he made. Notice this point carefully. Such men found no pleasure

in killing cowards; they thought it glorious only to kill a good fighter in a good fight. The lord is glad because his men killed somebody well worth killing. So, as I have already said, there is not one particle of personal emotion in the whole story. Nevertheless what emotion it makes within the reader! And what a wonderful art this is to create emotion in the reader's mind by suppressing it altogether in the narration! This is the supreme art of realism,— about which you may have heard a great deal in these last few years. I know of only one writer of the nineteenth century who had this same realistic power,— the late French story-teller de Maupassant. In the days before his brain weakened and madness destroyed his astonishing faculties, he also could create the most powerful emotion without the use of a single emotional word or suggestion. Some day I shall try to give you in English a short specimen of his power.

Now if you will consider these three things — the scarcity of adjectives, the absence of description, and the suppression of emotion, I think that you will be able to see what a wonderful bit of writing that was. But it is no more than a single example out of a possible hundred. And in a certain way the secret of it is the same which gave such surprise and delight in modern times to the readers of Hans Andersen. This matchless teller

of fairy tales and "wonder-stories" full of deep philosophical meanings, was, as you know, a Norseman,— even by blood a descendant of those same men who could write about the story of Eyjolf in the thirteenth century. I want to give you now another little story of the same kind from the old Icelandic saga of Njal. You will discover all the same qualities in it. The story told might almost be Japanese,— an incident of the old fierce custom of vengeance. Among the Norsemen, as among the men of old Japan, the brother was bound to avenge the death of the brother; the father had to avenge his son; everybody killed had some blood relative to avenge him. If there was no man to do this, there would often appear a brave woman willing and capable of doing it, and in the wars of Katakiuchi there were many brave things done on both sides, even by the little boys and girls. In this case the victims are a little boy and his grandparents. They are locked in a wooden house that has been surrounded by their enemies and set on fire. There are many people in the house, and they all are about to be destroyed without pity,— for this is a fight between two clans, and there are many deaths to be avenged. But suddenly the leader of the conquering party remembers that the old man inside used to be his teacher (I think there is a Japanese incident of almost exactly the same

kind in the story of a castle siege). Now we will make the old northern story-teller relate the rest.

Then Flosi went to the door, and called out to Njal, and said he would speak with him and Bergthord.

Now Njal does so, and Flosi said, "I will offer thee, master Njal, leave to go out; for it is unworthy that thou shouldst burn indoors."

"I will not go out," said Njal, "for I am an old man, and little fitted to avenge my sons; but I will not live in shame."

Then Flosi said to Bergthord: "Come thou out, housewife; for I will for no sake burn thee indoors."

"I was given away to Njal young," said Bergthord; "and I promised him this,— that we should both share the same fate."

After that they both went back into the house.

"What council shall we now take?" said Bergthord.

"We will go to our bed," says Njal, "and lay us down; I have long been eager for rest."

Then she said to the boy Thord, Kuri's son: "Thee will I take out, and thou shalt not burn in here."

"Thou hast promised me this, grandmother," says the boy, "that we should never part so long as I wished to be with thee; but methinks it is much better to die with thee and Njal than to live after you."

Then she bore the boy to her bed, and Njal spoke to his steward and said:

"Now thou shalt see where we lay us down,— for I mean not to stir an inch hence, whether reek or burning smart me, and so thou wilt be able to guess where to look for our bones."

He said that he would do so.

There had been an ox slaughtered, and the hide lay there. Njal told the steward to spread the hide over them, and he did so.

So there they lay down both of them in their bed, and put the boy between them. Then they signed themselves and the boy with the sign of the cross, and gave over their souls unto God's hand; and that was the last word that men heard them utter.

There are about four adjectives in all this; and, as in the former case, there is no description and no sympathy,— no sentiment. Very possibly this is an absolutely true incident, the steward, who was allowed to go out, having been afterward able to make a faithful report of what the old people and the boy said in the house. The young men said other things, full of fierce mockery,— things that manifest a spirit totally unlike anything in modern times. They stood up to be burned or to break their way out if a chance offered. One of the sons seeing the father lying down in the bed sarcastically observed, "Our father goes early to bed,— and that is what was to be looked for, as he is an old man." This grewsome joke shows that the young man would have preferred the father to die fighting. But the old folks were busy enough in preparing the little boy for death. It is a terrible story,— an atrociously cruel one; but it shows great nobility of character in the victims, and the reader is moved

in spite of himself by this most simple relation of fact.

Now perhaps you will think that this simple style can only produce such effects when the subject matter of the narrative is itself of a terrible or startling or extraordinary character. I am quite sure that this is not true, because I find exactly the same style in such a modern novel as "Synnövé Solbakken" by Björnson, and I find it in such fairy tales of Andersen as "The Ugly Duckling" and "The Little Mermaid." These simplest subjects are full of wonder and beauty for the eyes that can see and the mind that can think; and with such an eye and such a mind, the simple style is quite enough. How trifling at times are the subjects of Andersen's stories — a child's toy, a plant growing in the field, a snow image, made by children somewhat as we make a snow *daruma* in the farmyard, a rose-bush under the window. It would be nonsense to say that here the interest depends upon the subject matter! In such a story as "The Little Tin Soldier" we are really affected almost as much as by the story of Eyjolf in the old saga — simply because the old saga-teller and the modern story-teller wrote and thought very much in the same way. Or take another subject, of a more complicated character, the story of the "Nightingale of the Emperor of China and the Nightingale of the

Emperor of Japan." There is a great deal more meaning here than the pretty narrative itself shows upon the surface. The whole idea is the history of our human life,— the life of the artist, and his inability to obtain just recognition, and the power of the humbug to ignore him. It is a very profound story indeed; and there are pages in it which one can scarcely read with dry eyes. It affects us both intellectually and emotionally to an extraordinary degree; but the style is still the style of the old sagas. Of course I must acknowledge that Andersen uses a few more adjectives than the Icelandic writers did, but you will find, on examining him closely, that he does not use them when he can help it. Now the other style that I was telling you about,— the modern artistic style, uses adjectives almost as profusely as in poetry. I do not wish to speak badly of it; but scarcely any writer who uses it has been able to give so powerful an impression as the Norse writers who never used it at all.

In the simple style there is something of the genius of the race. After all, any great literary manner must have its foundation in race character. The manner that I have been describing is an evidence of northern race character at its very best. Quite incidentally I may observe here that another northern race, which has produced a literature only in very recent times, shows some-

thing of the same simple force of plain style,— I mean Russian literature. The great modern Russian writers, most of all, resemble the old Norse writers in their management of effects with few words. But my purpose in this lecture has been especially to suggest to you a possible resemblance between old Japanese literary methods and these old northern literary methods. I imagine that the northern simple art accords better with Japanese genius than ever could the more elaborate forms of literature, based upon the old classic studies.

II

SIR THOMAS BROWNE

In our first lecture on prose style you will recollect the extraordinary simplicity of the examples given from some of the old Norse writers. And you will have observed the lasting strength of that undecorated native simplicity. Today I am going to talk to you about a style which offers the very greatest possible contrast and opposition to the style of the Norse writers,— a style which represents the extreme power of great classical culture, vast scholarship, enormous reading,— a style which can be enjoyed only by scholars, which

never could become popular, and which nevertheless has wonderful merit in its way. I do not offer you examples with any idea of encouraging you to imitate it. But it is proper that you should be able to appreciate some of its fine qualities and to understand its great importance in the history of English literature. I mean the style of Sir Thomas Browne.

I have said that the influence of this style has been very great upon English literature. Before we go any further, allow me to explain this influence. Sir Thomas Browne was the first great English writer who made an original classic style. By classic style I mean an English prose style founded upon a profound study of the ancient classic writers, Greek and Latin, and largely coloured and made melodious by a skilful use of many-syllabled words derived from the antique tongues. There were original styles before. Sir Thomas Malory made a charming innovation in style. Lyly made a new style, too, — a style imitated from Spanish writers, extravagantly ornamented, extravagantly complicated, fantastic, artificial, tiresome,— the famous style called Euphuism. We shall have to speak of Euphuism at another time. It also was a great influence during a short period. But neither the delightful prose poetry of Sir Thomas Malory nor the extravagant and factitious style of Lyly has any-

thing in common with the style of Sir Thomas Browne. Sir Thomas Browne imitated nobody except the best Latin and Greek writers, and he imitated them with an art that no other Englishman ever approached. Moreover, he did not imitate them slavishly; he managed always to remain supremely original, and because he was a true prose poet, much more than because he imitated the beauties of the antique writers, he was able to influence English prose for considerably more than two hundred years. Indeed, I think we may say that his influence still continues; and that if he does not affect style today as markedly as he did a hundred years ago, it is only because one must be a very good scholar to do anything in the same direction as that followed by Sir Thomas Browne, and our very good scholars of today do not write very much in the way of essays or of poetry. The first person of great eminence powerfully affected by Sir Thomas Browne was Samuel Johnson. You know that Johnson affected the literature of the eighteenth century most powerfully, and even a good deal of the literature of the early nineteenth century. But Johnson was a pupil of Browne, and a rather clumsy pupil at that. He was not nearly so great a scholar as Sir Thomas Browne; he was much less broad-minded — that is to say, capable of liberal and generous tolerance, and he did not

have that sense of beauty and of poetry which distinguished Sir Thomas Browne. He made only a very bad imitation of Sir Thomas, exaggerating the eccentricities and missing the rare and delicate beauties. But the literary links between Browne and the eighteenth century are very easily established, and it is certain that Browne indirectly helped to form the literary prose of that period. Thus you will perceive how large a figure in the history of English literature he must be.

He was born in 1605, and he died in 1682. Thus he belongs to the seventeenth century, and his long life extends from nearly the beginning to within a few years of the end. We do not know very much about him. He was educated at Oxford, and studied medicine. Then he established himself as a doctor in the English country town of Norwich, famous in nursery-rhyme as the town to which the man-in-the-moon asked his way. In the leisure hours of his professional life he composed, at long intervals, three small books, respectively entitled "Religio Medici," "Pseudodoxia," and "Hydriotaphia." Neither the first, which is a treatise upon humanism in its relation to life and religion, nor the second, which is a treatise upon vulgar errors, need occupy us much for the present; they do not reveal his style in the same way as the third book. This "Hydriotaphia" is a treatise upon urn-burial, upon the habit

of the ancients of burying or preserving the ashes of their dead in urns of pottery or of metal. It is from this book that I am going to make some quotations. During Browne's lifetime he was recognized as a most wonderful scholar and amiable man, but there were only a few persons who could appreciate the finer beauties of his literary work. Being personally liked, however, he had no difficulty in making a social success; he was able to become tolerably rich, and he was created a knight by King Charles II. After his death his books and manuscript were sold at auction; and fortunately they were purchased afterwards for the British Museum. The whole of his work, including some posthumous essays, makes three volumes in the Bohn Library. Better editions of part of the text, however, have been recently produced; and others are in preparation. It is probable that Sir Thomas Browne will be studied very much again within the next fifty years.

The book about urn-burial really gives the student the best idea of Sir Thomas Browne. No other of his works so well displays his learning and his sense of poetry. Indeed, even in these days of more advanced scholarship, the learning of Sir Thomas Browne astonishes the most learned. He quotes from a multitude of authors, scarcely known to the ordinary student, as well as from almost every classic author known; likewise

from German, Italian, Spanish and Danish writers; likewise from hosts of the philosophers of the Middle Ages and the fathers of the church. Everything that had been written about science from antiquity up to the middle of the seventeenth century he would appear to have read,—botany, anatomy, medicine, alchemy, astrology; and the mere list of authorities cited by him is appalling. But to discover a man of the seventeenth century who had read all the books in the western world is a much less surprising fact than to find that the omnivorous reader remembered what he read, digested it, organized it, and everywhere discovered in it beauties that others had not noticed. Scholarship in itself is not, however, particularly interesting; and the charge of pedantry, of a needless display of learning, might have been brought against Sir Thomas Browne more than once. Today, you know, it is considered a little vulgar for a good scholar to make quotations from Greek and Latin authors when writing an English book. He is at once accused of trying to show off his knowledge. But even today, and while this is the rule, no great critic will charge Sir Thomas Browne of pedantry. He quotes classical authors extensively only while he is writing upon classical subjects; and even then, he never quotes a name or a fact without producing some unexpected and surprising

effect. Moreover, he very seldom cites a Latin or Greek text, but puts the Latin or Greek thought into English. Later on I shall try to show you what are the intrinsic demerits of this style, as well as its merits; but for the present let us study a few quotations. They will serve better than anything else to show what a curious writer he is.

In the little book about urn-burial, the first chapter treats generally about the burial customs of all nations of antiquity — indeed I might say of all nations in the world, together with the philosophical or religious reasons for different burial customs; and yet in the original book all this is told in about twenty pages. You will see therefore that Sir Thomas is not prolix; on the contrary, he presses his facts together so powerfully as to make one solid composition of them. Let us take a few sentences from this chapter:

> Some being of the opinion of Thales, that water was the orginal of all things, thought it most equal to submit unto the principle of putrefaction, and conclude in a moist relentment. Others conceived it most natural to end in fire, as due unto the master principle in the composition, according to the doctrine of Heraclitus; and therefore heaped up large piles, more actively to waft them toward that element, whereby they also declined a visible degeneration into worms, and left a lasting parcel of their composition. . . . But the Chaldeans, the great idolators of fire, abhorred the burning of their carcasses,

as a pollution of that deity. The Persian magi declined it upon the like scruple, and being only solicitous about their bones, exposed their flesh to the prey of birds and dogs. And the Parsees now of India, which expose their bodies unto vultures, and endure not so much as *feretra* or biers of wood, the proper fuel of fire, are led on with such niceties. But whether the ancient Germans, who burned their dead, held any such fear to pollute their deity of Herthus, or the Earth, we have no authentic conjecture.

The Egyptians were afraid of fire, not as a deity, but a devouring element, mercilessly consuming their bodies, and leaving too little of them; and therefore by precious embalmments, depositure in dry earths, or handsome enclosure in glasses, contrived the notablest ways of integral conservation. And from such Egyptian scruples, imbibed by Pythagoras, it may be conjectured that Numa and the Pythagorical sect first waved (modern *waived*) the fiery solution.

The Scythians, who swore by wind and sword, that is, by life and death, were so far from burning their bodies, that they declined all interment, and made their graves in the air; and the Icthyophagi, or fish-eating nations about Egypt, affected the sea for their grave, thereby declining visible corruption, and restoring the debt of their bodies. Whereas the old heroes, in Homer, dreaded nothing more than water or drowning; probably upon the old opinion of the fiery substance of the soul, only extinguishable by that element; and therefore the poet emphatically implieth the total destruction in this kind of death, which happened to Ajax Oileus.

So on, page after page crammed with facts and comments. He mentions even the Chinese

burial customs — so little known to Europeans of the seventeenth century; and his remarks upon them are tolerably correct, considering all the circumstances. You will acknowledge that a dry subject is here most interestingly treated; this is the art that can give life to old bones. But the main thing is the style,— remember we are still early in the seventeenth century, in the year 1658; see how dignified, how sonorous, how finely polished are these rolling sentences, all of which rise and fall with wave-like regularity and roundness. You feel that this is the scholar who writes,— the scholar whose ear has been trained to the long music of Greek and Latin sentences. And even when he uses words now obsolete or changed in meaning, you can generally know very well from the context what is meant. For instance, "relentment," which now has no such meaning, is used in the sense of dissolution, and "conclude," of which the meaning is now most commonly to finish in the literary sense, this old doctor uses in the meaning of to end life, to finish existence. But you do not need to look at the glossary at the end of the book in order to know this.

We might look to such a writer for all the arts of finished prose known to the best masters of today; and we should find them in the most elaborate perfection. The use of antithesis, long

afterwards made so famous by Macaulay, was used by Browne with quite as much art, and perhaps with even better taste. Certainly his similes are quite as startling:

> Though the funeral pyre of Patroclus took up an hundred foot, a piece of an old boat burnt Pompey; and if the burthen of Isaac were sufficient for an holocaust, a man may carry his own pyre.

The subject is always made interesting, whether the writer be speaking of mathematics or of gardens, of graves or of stars. Hear him when he begins on the subject of ghosts — how curious the accumulation of facts, and how effective the contrasts:

> The dead seem all alive in the human Hades of Homer, yet cannot well speak, prophesy, or know the living, except they drink blood, wherein is the life of man. And therefore the souls of Penelope's paramours, conducted by Mercury, chirped like bats, and those which followed Hercules made a noise but like a flock of birds.
>
> The departed spirits know things past and to come; yet are ignorant of things present. Agamemnon foretells what should happen to Ulysses; yet ignorantly enquires what has become of his own son. The ghosts are afraid of swords in Homer; yet Sibylla tells Æneas in Virgil, the thin habit of spirits was beyond the force of weapons. The spirits put off their malice with their bodies, and Cæsar and Pompey accord in Latin hell; yet Ajax, in Homer, endures not a conference with Ulysses; and Deiphobus appears all mangled in Virgil's ghosts, yet we

meet with perfect shadows among the wounded ghosts of Homer.

But these examples do not show Browne at his very best; they merely serve to illustrate his ordinary style. To show him at his best through quotation is a very difficult thing, as Professor Saintsbury recently pointed out. His splendours are in rare sentences which somehow or other light up the whole page in which they occur. Every student should know the wonderful passage about the use of Egyptian mummies for medicine,—mummy-flesh being a drug known to English medicine up to the year 1721. I should like to read the whole passage to you in which this sentence occurs, but this would require too much time; suffice to quote the conclusion:

> Egyptian ingenuity was more unsatisfied, contriving their bodies in sweet consistencies, to attend the return of their souls. But all was vanity, feeding the wind, and folly. The Egyptian mummies which Cambyses or time hath spared, avarice now consumeth. Mummy is become merchandise, Mizraim cures wounds, and Pharaoh is sold for balsams.

If Sir Thomas Browne had lived in modern times he might have added that mummies were used on the steamboats of the Nile instead of coal — even within our own day. The bodies of common people were preserved mostly by the

use of cheap resinous substances, such as pitch; therefore, as soon as it was found by the steamboat companies that they would burn very well indeed, they were burned by tens of thousands to make steam! Also I suppose that you may have heard how mummy dust was sold for manure, until English laws were passed to prevent the custom. Sir Thomas Browne's object in these pages is only to point out the folly of funeral pomp, or of seeking to maintain a great fame among men after death, because all things are impermanent and pass away; and his illustrations are always strikingly forcible. On the subject of human impermanency the book is full of splendid sentences, many of which are worth learning by heart. But let us turn to a less sombre subject — to a beautiful paragraph in the fourth chapter of the "Garden of Cyrus":

> Light that makes things seen, makes some things invisible; were it not for darkness and the shadow of the earth, the noblest part of the creation had remained unseen, and the stars in heaven as invisible as on the fourth day, when they were created above the horizon with the sun, or there was not an eye to behold them. The greatest mystery of religion is expressed by adumbration, and in the noblest part of Jewish types, we find the cherubims shadowing the mercy-seat. Life itself is but the shadow of death, and souls departed but the shadow of the living. All things fall under this name. The sun itself is but the dark *simulacrum,* and light but the shadow of God.

The little essay from which I have made this quotation, usually bound up with the work on urn-burial and called the "Garden of Cyrus" is a most curious thing. It is a dissertation upon the Quincunx, or, to use simpler language, a dissertation upon the mathematical, geometrical and mystical values of the number Five. The doctor, beginning his subject with some remarks about the merit of arranging trees in a garden by groups of five, is led on to consider the signification of five in all its relations to the universe. He discourses upon that number in the heavens and upon the earth and even in the waters which are beneath the earth. He has remarked that not only in the human hand and foot do we find the divisions of five fingers and five toes, but we find like divisions in the limbs of countless animals and in the petals of flowers. He was very near a great discovery in these observations; you know that botany today recognizes the meaning of fives and sixes in floral division; and you know that modern physiology has established beyond any question the fact that even in the hoofs of a horse or of a cow we have the rudiments of five toes that anciently existed. If the doctor had lived a little later — say in the time of that country doctor, Erasmus Darwin, he might have been able to forecast many discoveries of Charles Darwin. Anyhow, his little essay is delightful to read; and if he did not anticipate

some general laws of modern science, he was none the less able to establish his declaration that "all things began in order, so shall they end, and so shall they begin again; according to the ordainer of order and mystical mathematics of the city of heaven."

It would be wrong to call Sir Thomas Browne a mystic outside of the Christian sense. He was really a religious man, and he would not have ventured to put out theories which he believed the church would condemn. But no writer ever felt the poetry of mysticism more than he, or expressed its aspirations better without actually sharing them. Therefore his books have been classed with mystical literature, and are much admired and studied by mystics. It is impossible to read him and not be occasionally astonished by suggestions and thoughts that seem much too large for orthodox Christianity, but which would excellently illustrate the teaching of older eastern religions.

I shall be glad if these notes upon Sir Thomas Browne should serve to interest you in some of his best writings. But I think that his value for you will be chiefly in the suggestive direction. He is a great teacher in certain arts of style — in the art of contrast, in the art of compression, in the art of rhythm, and of melody. I do not think that you could, however, learn the latter from

him. What you would learn would be the value of contrasts of metaphor, and of a certain fine economy of words; the rest is altogether too classical for you to apprehend the secret of it. Indeed, it is only a Greek and Latin training that can give full apprehension of what the beauties of his style are. But, like all true style, there is much there that means only character, personality,— the charm of the man himself, the grace of his mind; and all that, you can very well understand. I think you could scarcely read the book and not feel strange retrospective affection for the man who wrote it.

Now the great thing for you to remember about his place in English literature is that he was the father and founder of English classic prose. He was the source from which Dr. Johnson obtained inspiration; he was the first also to show those capacities of majesty and sonority in English prose which Gibbon afterwards displayed on so vast a scale; he was also the first to use effectively that art of contrast and of antithesis which was to make so great a part of the wonderful style of Macaulay. And even today no student can read Sir Thomas Browne without some profit. He is incomparably superior to Bacon and to not a few others who are much more widely known. I do not think that the study of Bacon's essays can be at all profitable to the stu-

dent in the matter of style — rather the reverse. The value of Bacon is chiefly in his thinking. But Sir Thomas Browne offers you both thoughts and style in the very finest form.

Nevertheless I must utter a final word of disfavour. There is one drawback to all such style as that which we have been considering — not excepting the styles of Gibbon or Macaulay. It is the necessarily limited range of their power. You can not appeal to the largest possible audience with a scholarly style. And what is worse, every such style, being artificial more than natural, contains within itself certain elements of corruption and dissolution. We have to read Sir Thomas Browne with a glossary today — that is, if we wish to be very exact in our renderings of his thoughts; you will find an extensive glossary attached to his work. This you will not find in Gibbon or Macaulay, but this is only because they are still near to us in time. For all that, the language of the former is now found to be decidedly old-fashioned, notwithstanding its beauty; and the style of the latter will probably become old-fashioned during the present century. It is quite otherwise in the case of that simple northern style, of which I gave you specimens in a former lecture. That never can become old-fashioned, even though the language die in which it was originally written. Containing nothing artificial, it

also contains no element of decay. It can impress equally well the most learned and the most ignorant minds, and if we have to make a choice at all between their perfectly plain style and the gorgeous music and colours of Sir Thomas Browne, I should not hesitate for a moment to tell you that the simple style is much the better. However, that is not a reason for refusing to give to the classic writers the praise and admiration which they have so justly earned.

III

BJORNSON

Before studying some further wonderful prose I want to speak to you about what I believe to be a wide-spread and very harmful delusion in Japan. I mean the delusion that students of English literature ought to study in English only the books originally written in English;— not English translations from other languages. Of course, in these times, I acknowledge that there is some reason for distrust of translations. Translations are made very quickly and very badly, only for the purpose of gaining money, and a vast amount of modern translation is absolute trash, but it is very different in the case of foreign works which

have been long adopted into the English language, and which have become practically a common possession of Englishmen,— such as the translation of the "Arabian Nights," the grand prose translation of Goethe's "Faust," the translation of "Wilhelm Meister" by Carlyle, the translation of "Undine" which every boy reads, to mention only a few things at random. So with the translations of the great Italian and Spanish and Russian writers,— not to speak of French writers. In fact, if Englishmen had studied only English literature, English literature would never have become developed as it is now. And if Englishmen had studied foreign literature only in the original tongue, English literature would still have made very little progress. It has been through thousands of translations, not through scholarly study, that the best of our poetry, the best of our fiction, the best of our prose has been modified and improved by foreign influence. As I once before told you, the development of literature is only in a very limited degree the work of the scholars. The great scholars are seldom producers of enduring literature. The men who make that must be men of natural genius, which has nothing to do with scholarship; and the majority of them are not, as a rule, even educated beyond the ordinary. To furnish these men with the stimulus of exotic ideas, those ideas should be

placed before them in their own tongue. Now it may seem to you very strange that foreign influence should operate chiefly through translations, but the history of nearly every European literature proves that such is the case. And I am quite sure that if Japan is to produce an extensive new literature in the future, it will not be until after fresh ideas have become widely assimilated by the nation through thousands of translations. For these reasons, I think it is a very unfortunate notion that the study of English literature should be confined to the study of books originally written in English, or even written by Englishmen.

How is the mind of the English boy formed? If you think about that, you will discover that English literature really represents but a part and a small part of world influences on him. After the age of the nursery songs, most of which are really of English origin, comes the age of fairy tales, of which very few can be traced to English sources. Indeed I believe that "Jack the Giant Killer" and "Jack and the Beanstalk" are quite exceptional in the fact that they are truly English. "Puss in Boots" is not English, but French; "Cinderella" is French; "The Sleeping Beauty" is French; "The White Cat" is French; and "Bluebeard" is French. In fact, the great mass of our fairy tales are translations from French authors such as Perrault and Madame

d'Aulnoy, to mention only two. When the little boy has feasted himself to repletion upon this imaginative diet, what is the next course of reading? Other fairy tales, of a deeper character — half pure story, half moral teaching; and where do these stories come from? Well, they are not English at all; they are translations from other languages, chiefly German and Swedish. The most important of all works of this kind are those of Hans Andersen. Every child must read them and learn from them, and they have now become so much a part of English child life that we can not help wondering what children did before Andersen was born. The best German work of this sort is the work of Grimm. Everybody knows something about that. After this reading, stories of adventure are generally taken up, or slight romances of some kind. There is "Robinson Crusoe," of course, which is English, and "Gulliver's Travels"; but excepting these two, I believe that most of the first class of juvenile romance consists of translations. For example, in my boyhood the romances of Henry Conscience were read by all boys; and they are translated from the Dutch. And even when a lad has come to delight in Sir Walter Scott, he has still foreign literary influences of even greater power working upon his imagination — such as the magic of the elder Alexandre Dumas. The wonderful

stories of "Monte Cristo" and of "The Three Musketeers" have become indispensable reading for the young, and their influence upon modern English fiction has been very great. Still later one has to read the extraordinary novels of Victor Hugo; and there is no time at which the English student is not directly or indirectly affected by French masters as well as by the German masters. Of course you will say that I am mentioning modern authors when I speak of Dumas and Hugo. Yes, they are almost contemporaries. But when we look back to the times before these great men were heard of, we still find that foreign literature influenced Elizabethans quite as much as contemporary English literature. In the eighteenth century the influence was French, and other foreign influences were at work. Then everybody had to read the classic French authors, but even these were not dull; there were storytellers among them who supplied what the authors of the romantic time supplied to the English youth of the nineteenth century. Also in the seventeenth century there was some French influence, mixed with Italian and Spanish. In the Elizabethan Age, education was not so widely diffused, but we know that the young people of those times used to read Spanish novels and stories, and that no less than one hundred and seventy Spanish books were then translated.

I think you will see from all this that English literature actually depends for its vitality upon translations, and that the minds of English youth are by no means formed through purely English influences. Observe that I have not said anything about the study of Greek and Latin, which are more than foreign influences; they are actually influences from another vanished world. Nor have I said anything about the influence of religious literature, vast as it is — Hebrew literature, literature of the Bible, on which are based the prayers that children learn at their mother's knee. Really, instead of being the principal factor in English education, English literature occupies quite a small place. If an Englishman only knew English literature, he would know very little indeed. The best of his literature may be in English; he has Shakespeare, for example; but the greater part of it is certainly not English, and even today its yearly production is being more and more affected by the ideas of France and Italy and Russia and Sweden and Norway — without mentioning the new influences from many Oriental countries.

No: you should think of any foreign language that you are able to acquire, not as the medium for expressing only the thoughts of one people, but as a medium through which you can obtain the best thought of the world. If you can not

read Russian, why not read the Russian novelists in English or French? Perhaps you can not read Italian or Spanish; but that is no reason why you should not know the poems of Petrarch and Ariosto, or the dramas of Calderon. If you do not know Portuguese, there is a good English translation of Camoens. I suppose that in Tokyo very few persons know Finnish; but the wonderful epic of "Kalevala" can be read today in English, French and in German. It is not necessary to have studied Sanskrit in order to know the gigantic epics of India; there are many European translations of the "Mahabharata" and "Ramayana"— indeed, there are English and French translations of most of the great Sanskrit writers, though the Germans have been perhaps the greatest workers in this field. You can read the Arabian and the Persian poets also in English; and there are Oriental classics that everybody should know something about — such as the "Shah-Nameh," or "Book of Kings" of Firdusi; "The Gulistan" of Saadi; and the "Divan" of Hafiz. And speaking of English translations only, both the written and the unwritten literatures of almost every people under the sun can be read in English — even the songs and the proverbs of the most savage tribes. There is one great defect in English work of this kind,— a great deal of such translation has been made in

bad verse. For this reason the French translators who keep to prose are generally to be preferred. But you have certainly learned how great some English translators have proved themselves, even in verse,— for example, Fitzgerald; and scarcely less interesting and sympathetic than Fitzgerald is Palmer's volume of translation from the ancient Arabian poets. However, what I am anxious to impress upon you is this,— that the English language can give you not only some knowledge of the productions of one race, but the intellectual wealth of the entire world. In England there are many thousands of persons who can not read German, but there are no educated persons who have not read the German poets in English, and who can not quote to you some verses of Heine.

Now if you are satisfied that the study of English means for you infinitely more than the study of English authors, you will know why I am not attempting to confine these lectures to original English prose. I shall take only the best examples that I can find in any kind of European prose for illustration; because everything depends upon the idea and the form, and neither the idea nor the form of prose (it is not the same in the case of poetry) can be restricted by the boundaries of language. In the last two lectures of this series I gave you two extremely different examples of

style — one representing the old Norse or saga style; the other the elaborate, fantastic, almost pedantic, but matchlessly beautiful prose of Sir Thomas Browne. Both of these refer to the past; and the contrast was about as strong as it could be made. Now let us turn to modern times, to the nineteenth century, and again take two striking examples of the most simple and the most ornamental varieties of prose. The simple style will again be Norse; for the genius of the race, which showed itself so markedly in those quotations from the sagas which I gave you, again shows itself today in the nineteenth century prose of the very same people. Let us now talk about that.

You must not suppose that Norse literature remained unaffected by change through all the centuries — I am not speaking of language (that is not at all the same), but of method. On the contrary, the Norwegians and Swedes and Danes went through very much the same kind of literary experiences as the English and the French, the Italians and the Germans. They had also their romantic and classic periods; even they became for a while artificial, especially the Danes; and the Danish culture remained very conservative in its classicism until well into the nineteenth century. And at that time it was Danish culture that especially affected education in Norway and

Sweden. But in 1832 there was born a man destined to revive the ancient saga literature in modern times, and so make a new literature unlike anything that had been before it. That man was Björnstjerne Björnson. He went through the usual course of university education, and did not prove himself a good scholar. He was always dreaming about other things than Greek or Latin or mathematics, and instead of trying to compete for any university honours, he gave all his spare time to the reading of books having nothing to do with the university course. The ancient Norse literature especially interested him; he read everything relating to it that he could lay hands upon. He had hard work to pass his examinations, and his fellow-students never imagined that he would be able to do anything great in the world. But presently, after leaving the university, this dreaming young man suddenly developed an immense amount of unsuspected intellectual energy. He became a journalist, which, of all professions, is the worst for a man of letters to undertake; and in spite of it he produced a wonderful novel, within quite a short time, which attracted the attention of all Europe and has been translated into most European languages. This novel was " Synnövé Solbakken," a story of Norwegian peasant life. Björnson himself was a peasant's son, and he had lived and seen that

which he described in this novel. But the wonder of the book was not in the story, not in the plot; it was in the astonishing method of the telling. The book reads as if it had been written by a saga man of the ninth or tenth century; the life described is indeed modern, but the art of telling it is an art a thousand years old, which scholars imagined could never be revived again. Björnson revived it; and by so doing he has affected almost every literature in Europe. Perhaps he has especially affected some of the great French realists; at all events, he gave everybody interested in literature something new to think about. But this first novel was only the beginning of a surprising series of productions,— poetical, romantic, historical and political. Björnson went into politics, became a statesman, did honour to his country, did a great many wonderful things. But his chief merit is that he is the father and founder of a new literature, which we may call modern Norse. The study of the modern Norse writers ought to be of great service to Japanese students, for this strong and simple style accords remarkably well with the best traditions of Japanese prose. Moreover, the works of these writers have been put into English by scholarly men — masters of clear and pure English, who have been able to preserve the values of the original. This is easy to do in the case of the Northern dialects

proper, which are very close to English — much closer than French, much closer even than German. The simpler the style, the less it loses by translation.

Moreover, you will find in the work of this man the most perfect pictures possible to make of the society and the character of a people. The people ought to interest you — ought to interest any student of English literature; for it was out of this far north that came the best element in the English race, the strongest and a good deal of the best feeling that expresses itself in English literature. You will find in these stories, or studies from real life, that the race has remained very much the same from ancient times. It is true that today in all the schools of Norway the students learn English and French; that modern science and modern philosophy are most diligently acquired; that Norway has produced poets, dramatists, men of science, and men of art, well worthy of being compared with those of almost any other country. It is true that writers like Björnson and Ibsen (the only other Norwegian man of letters of today who can be compared with Björnson) have been actually able to influence English literature and European drama in general. But it is not in the cities nor in the most highly cultivated classes that the national distinctiveness in the character of a people can be judged. You must

go into the country to study that; you must know the peasantry, who really form the body and strength of any nation. Björnson well knew this; and his university training did not blind him to the literary importance of such studies. The best of his fiction, and the bulk of it, treats of peasant life; and this life he portrayed in a way that has no parallel in European literature, with the possible exception of the Russian work done by Turgueniev and others. He has also given us studies of Norwegian character among the middle class, among the clergymen, and among the highly cultivated university people, who discuss the philosophy of Spencer and the ethics of Kant. But these studies are interesting only to the degree that they show the real Norse character, such as the peasant best exemplifies, in spite of modern education. It is a very stern, strong and terrible character; but it is also both lovable and admirable. Brutal at moments, it is the most formidable temperament that we can imagine; but in steadfastness and affection and depth of emotional power, it is very grand. At first you will think that these terrible fathers who beat their children, and these terrible young men who fight with demons on occasion, or who climb precipices to court the maiden of their choice, are still savage. But after the shock of the strange has passed, you will see that they are after all very

human and very affectionate; and that if they are rougher than we in their ways, it is because they are stronger and better able to endure and to benefit by pain. Well, as I said, every kind of northern society is depicted in Björnson's tales, but the greatest of all is the story of "Synnövé Solbakken." It is a very simple story of peasant life. It describes the lives of a boy and girl in the country up to the time of their marriage to each other, and it treats especially of the inner life of these two — their thoughts, their troubles, their affections. There is nothing unusual about it except the truth of the delineation. This delineation is done very much as the old Norse writers of whom I spoke to you before would have done it.

I shall quote only a little bit,— because the ancient extracts which I gave you from the saga must have served to show you what I mean. The scene described is that where the boy is taken to church for the first time, and there sees a little girl whom he is to marry many years later.

There was a little girl kneeling on the bench, and looking over the railing. She was still fairer than the man — so fair that he had never seen her equal. She had a red streamer to her cap, and yellow hair beneath this, and she smiled at him — so that for a long time he could not see anything but her white teeth. She held a hymn-book

in one hand, and a folded handkerchief in the other, and was now amusing herself by striking the handkerchief on the hymn-book. The more he stared the more she smiled; and now he chose also to kneel on the bench just as she was doing. Then she nodded. He looked gravely at her a moment; then he nodded. She smiled and nodded once more; he nodded again, and once more, and still once more. She smiled, but did not nod any more for a little while, until he had quite forgotten; then she nodded.

No more natural description was ever given of the manner in which two little children, still untrained, act upon seeing each other for the first time, without being able to get close enough to talk. They tried to talk by nods and smiles, when they like each other's looks. There is a very fine study of conversation when these two do come together — the random conversation of children, full of affection, also full of innocent vanity and innocent desire to please. But before they come together the little boy has a fight with another little boy, which is also admirably told. You feel that the writer of the book must have had this fight himself. Later on the hero is to have a very terrible fight, with a jealous and powerful man — a fight that almost takes the reader's breath away; and this is told just as a saga man would have told it a thousand years ago. I am not going to attempt to quote it now, for it is too long; and one part can not be ex-

tracted from the rest without injuring the effect of the whole. But some day when you read it, please to notice that quality in it by which northern writers surpass all others — I mean exactness in relating the succession of incidents. This is a quality to which Professor Ker has but lately called attention. I told you, when we were talking about the sagas, that I believed the style of these men depended upon the perfection of their senses — quickness of eye, accuracy of perception; and what Professor Ker has said in his lectures upon this very style would seem to confirm this. For example, he remarks that a writer of today might write in English such a statement as "he felt the king come behind him and put both hands over his eyes." Professor Ker observes that a Norseman never could have written such a statement, because it is inaccurate in regard to the succession of incidents. The Norse writer would have said, "he felt some one touching him from behind; and before he could turn his head to look, a hand was placed over his eyes; and he knew, by the ring upon the hand, that it was the king." That is the proper way to relate the fact accurately. He could not know, when he first felt himself touched behind, that the king was touching him, nor could he know that the king's hands were placed before his eyes, until he saw something about or upon the hands, by which he

could identify them. Seeing the king's ring upon a finger of the hand, he knew that he was being held by the king. In reality all this would happen in a second, and modern writers are not in the habit of studying the succession of the events within so short a time as a second. But the Norseman was obliged to do so; if he could not measure with his eye what took place within even the fraction of a second, he might lose his life at any moment. Now you will find in the description of this fight in "Synnövé Solbakken" exactly the same faultless accuracy as to succession of incidents. One man is drunk, and undertakes to fight because he is drunk; the other man, who is sober, does not wish to fight, nevertheless the fight is forced upon him by a succession of little circumstances, all of which could not have occupied more than five or ten minutes. An English story-writer of today would probably have compressed that ten minutes into two lines of prose. But Björnson gives three pages to those ten minutes, and by so doing he thrills you with all the excitement and passion of the moment as no English writer can do. Still, you must not think that he is prolix. Really he never describes anything which is not absolutely necessary. But he knows what is necessary much better than other writers. He does not avoid little details because they happen to be very difficult to recount.

If any of you have been forced into a quarrel of a dangerous kind, I am sure you will remember that all the little details of those moments before the quarrel, although not remarked perhaps by others present, were extremely clear to your own perception. Danger sharpens the senses, quite independently of the fact that the person is brave or not brave. At any such time you can hear and you can see better than at ordinary times. Björnson knew this. That is what makes his account of the fight between two peasants one of the greatest things in modern fiction.

Now I want to interest you in Björnson as the founder of a school,— to make you remember his name, to tempt you to read his wonderful story. But I shall not talk more about him now. Enough to say that he has done in Norway what I hope some future Japanese writer will do in Japan. You know what I mean by Norse style both in ancient ages and in our own day — that is, you must be able after these lectures to have a general idea about it. And now for a contrast. Nothing is more strongly contrasted with this sharply cut hard short style of the Norse than the prose of the modern romantic movement. The romantic movement in prose did not reach its greatest height in England. The English language is not perfect enough in its prose form for the supreme possibilities of prose. It was in

France that romantic prose became most highly perfected; there were so many masters of style that it is hard to make choice among them. But only one conceived the idea of what we call poetical prose — that was Baudelaire; he was, you know, a great and strange poet who wrote a volume of splendid but very terrible verse called "Les Fleurs de Mal," or "Flowers of Evil"— perhaps "venomous or poisonous flowers" would better express the real meaning of the title. He also translated the stories of Poe into French; and he was in all things an exquisite artist.

IV

BAUDELAIRE

Baudelaire believed that prose could be made quite as poetical as verse or even more so, for a prose that could preserve the rhythm of poetry without its monotony, and the melody of poetry without rhythm, might become in the hands of the master even more effective than verse. I do not know whether this is really true. I am inclined to think that it is; but I do not feel sufficiently learned in certain matters related to the question to venture a definite opinion. Enough to say that Baudelaire thought it possible, and he

tried to make a new kind of prose; and the book containing these attempts entitled "Little Poems in Prose" is a wonderful treasure. But Baudelaire did not say anything very extravagant in its preface. He only expressed the conviction that a poetical prose might be used with good effects for certain particular subjects,— dreams, reveries, the thoughts that men think in solitude, when the life of the world is not about them to disturb their meditations; his prose essays are all reveries, dreams, fantasies. I want to give you a specimen of one of these; and I am going to choose that one which Professor Saintsbury selected as the best. But let me tell you in advance that the English language cannot reproduce the real values of Baudelaire's prose. I am not going to attempt an artistic translation for you, but only such a translation as may help to show you in a vague way what poetical prose means. The piece I am going to turn into English is called "Les Bienfaits de la Lune,"— that is to say, freely rendered, the Gifts of the Moon,— the word "Bienfaits" (literally, benefit) being here used in the meaning of the present or gift given to a child by a fairy god-mother.

The Moon, who is caprice itself, looked through the window while thou wert sleeping in thy cradle, and exclaimed: "That child pleases me!" And she softly descended her stairway of clouds, and passed without sound

through the panes of glass; then she stretched herself above thee, with a mother's supple tenderness, and she put her own colours upon thy face. Wherefore thine eyes have always remained green and thy cheeks extraordinarily pale. It was while contemplating this visitor that thine eyes first became so fantastically large; and she compressed thy throat so tenderly that since that time thou hast always felt a constant desire to weep.

Meanwhile, in the expansion of her joy, the Moon filled the whole room, like a phosphoric atmosphere, like a luminous poison; and all that living light thought and spoke: "Thou shalt eternally endure the influence of my kiss; thou shalt be beautiful after my fashion; thou shalt love all I love, and all that love me — water, the clouds, the silence, and the night; the waters formless and multiform; the place where thou shalt never be; the lover thou shalt never know; monstrous flowers; the perfumes that give delirium; the cats that stretch themselves upon pianos, and moan like women, with a hoarse sweet voice.

And thou shalt be loved by my lovers, courted by my courtiers. Thou shalt be the queen of green-eyed men, whose throats I have also pressed in my nocturnal caress, — those who love the sea, the immense, tumultuous green sea-water, formless and multiform, the place in which they are not, the woman they know not, the sinister flowers that resemble the censers of some unknown religion, the perfumes that confuse the will, the wild and voluptuous animals that are the emblems of their madness.

Of course in the French this is incomparably more musical and more strange. You will see that it has the qualities of poetry, although not poetry; it has the same resonance, the same groupings of vowel sounds, the same alliteration, the

same cadences. It is very strange, and it is also really beautiful. Probably Baudelaire's poetical prose is the most perfect attempt of the kind ever made; and there is a good deal of it. But being a very great artist, he saw, as I have told you before, that this kind of prose is suitable only for reveries, dreams, philosophical fancies. And thereby comes the question as to whether a book of that kind should be written only in one style.

Now this may seem to you a queer question, but I think that it is a very important one. The French have solved it; the English have not. Everything depends upon the character of the book. If the book be composed of different kinds of material, it seems to me quite proper that it should be written in different styles to suit the differences of subjects. You cannot do this, however, except in a book which is a miscellany, a mixture of reflection and fact. Combinations of the latter kind are chiefly possible in works of travel. In a book of travel you cannot keep up the tone of poetical prose while describing simple facts; but when you come to reflect upon the facts, you can then vary the style. French books of travel are much superior to English in point of literary execution, because the writers of them do this. They do it so naturally that you are apt to overlook the fact that there are two styles in the same book. I know of only one really great

English book of travel which has the charm of poetical prose,— that is the "Eothen" of Kinglake. But in this case the entire book is written in one dream tone. The author has not attempted to deal with details to any extent. Beautiful as the book is, it does not show the versatility which French writers of equal ability often display. While on this subject, it occurs to me to show you an example of the difference in English and French methods, as shown by two contemporary writers in describing Tokyo. The English writer is Kipling. He is certainly the most talented English writer now living in descriptive and narrative work. The greatest living prose writer among the French is Pierre Loti (Julien Viaud), a French naval officer, and you know a member of the Academy. I hope that you have not been prejudiced against him by the stupid criticisms of very shallow men; and that you do not make the mistake of blaming the writer for certain observations regarding Japan, which were made during a stay of only some weeks in this country. Although he was here only for some weeks, and could only describe exactly what he saw, knowing nothing about Japan except through his eyes, yet his sketches of Japan are incomparably finer and truer than anything which has been done by any other living writer. His comments, his inferences may be entirely

wrong (they often are); but that has nothing really to do with the merit of his descriptions. When he describes exactly what he sees, then he is like a wonderful magician. There is nobody else living who could do the same thing. I suppose you know that his reputation does not depend upon his Japanese work, however, but upon some twenty volumes of travel containing the finest prose that has ever been written. However, let us first take a few lines from the English traveller's letter. It is very simply phrased, and yet very effective.

> Some folks say that Tokyo covers an area equal to London. Some folks say that it is not more than ten miles long and eight miles broad. There are a good many ways of solving the question. I found a tea-garden situated on a green plateau far up a flight of steps, with pretty girls smiling on every step. From this elevation I looked forth over the city, and it stretched away from the sea, as far as the eye could reach — one grey expanse of packed house-roof, the perspective marked by numberless factory chimneys. Then I went several miles away and found a park, another eminence, and some more tea-girls prettier than the last; and, looking again, the city stretched out in a new direction as far as the eye could reach. Taking the scope of an eye on a clear day at eighteen miles, I make Tokyo thirty-six miles long by thirty-six miles broad exactly; and there may be some more which I missed. The place roared with life through all its quarters.

Here is the work of a practical man with a

practical eye — interested in facts above all things, though not indifferent at any time to what is beautiful. Now, anybody who reads that paragraph will have an idea of the size of Tokyo such as pages of description could not give. There is only one half line of description to note, but it is very strong; and the use of house-roof in the singular gives a particular force to it. That is quite enough to satisfy the average mind. But the Frenchman is an infinitely finer artist. He also gives you a description of Tokyo seen as a wilderness of roofs; but he first chooses a beautiful place from which to look and a beautiful time of the day in which to see it. Let me translate a few sentences for you:

Uyeno,— a very large park, wide avenues, well gravelled,— bordered with magnificent old trees, and tufts of bamboos.

I halt upon an elevation at a point overlooking the Lotos-lake, which reflects the evening, like a slightly tarnished mirror, all the gold of sunset. Yedo is beyond those still waters; Yedo is over there, half-lost in the reddish mist of the Autumn evening; a myriad of infinite little greyish roofs all alike,— the furthest, almost indistinguishable in the vague horizon, giving nevertheless an impression that that is not all,— that there are more of them, much more, in distances beyond the view. You can distinguish, amidst the uniformity of the low small houses, certain larger buildings with the angles of their roofs turned up. These are the temples. If it were not for them, you might imagine that you were looking at

almost any great city quite as well as you could imagine that you were looking at Yedo. Indeed, it requires the effects of distance and of a particular light to make Yedo appear charming; at this moment, for example, I must confess that it is exquisite to see.

It is dimly outlined in the faintest colours; it has the look of not really existing,— of being only a mirage. Then it seems as if long bands of pink cotton were slowly unrolling over the world,— drawing this chimerical city in their soft undulations. Now one can no longer distinguish the interval between the lake and the further high land upon which all those myriads of far-away shapes are built. One even doubts whether that really is a lake, or only a very smooth level, reflecting the diffused light of the sky, or simply a stretch of vapour; nevertheless, some few long rosy gleams, still showing upon the surface, almost suffice to assure you that it is really water, and that Lotus-beds here and there make black patches against the reflecting surface.

Although this rapid translation does not give you the colour and charm of the original French, you must be able to see even through it how very accurate and fine the description is — an effect of evening sunlight and rosy mist. I think that most of you have enjoyed the same view, and have noticed how black the lotos leaves really do seem, when the surface of the water is turned to gold by sunset. And then the description of the coming of the mists like long cloud bands of pink cotton is surely as beautiful as it is true. That is the way that a Japanese painter would paint a picture

of Tokyo as seen from the same place at the same time. The Englishman would not have noticed all those delicate and dreamy colours, or if he did, would not trouble himself to try to paint them. Really it is a most difficult thing to do.

Now after this little digression let me come back to the subject of variety in style. Loti knows the art of it; so does many another French writer; but very few Englishmen do. What I am going to say is this, that an author ought to be able to choose a different style for different kinds of work,— that is, a great author. But it is so much trouble to master even one style perfectly well, that very few authors attempt this. However, I think it can be laid down as a true axiom that the style ought to vary with the subject in certain cases; and I think that the great writers of the future will so vary it. The poetical prose, of which I gave you an example from Loti, is admirably suited for particular kinds of composition — short and dreamy things. It is very exhausting to write much in such a style; it is quite as much labour as to write the same thing in verse. But a whole book upon one subject could not be written in this way. The simple naked style, on the other hand, is particularly adapted to story telling, to narrative, even to certain forms of history. The rhetorical style, ornamental without being exactly poetical, has also a

special value; it is in such a style that logical argument and philosophical work in the form of essays can perhaps be most effectively presented. I think that some day this will be generally done. But once it becomes a fashion to do it, there will be danger ahead,— the danger of the custom hardening into conventionalism. Conventionalism kills style. The best way, I think, to meet the difficulty suggested will be to persuade oneself that sentiment, artistic feeling, absolute sincerity of the emotion and of the thought will guide the writer better than any rules as to what style ought to be used. If you try to imitate a model, you will probably go wrong. All literary imitation means weakness. But if you simply follow your own feeling and tastes, trying to be true to them, and to develop them as much as you can — then I think that your style will form itself and will naturally, without direction, take at last the particular form and tone best adapted to the subject.

CHAPTER IV

THE VALUE OF THE SUPERNATURAL IN FICTION

The subject of this lecture is much more serious than may appear to you from this title. Young men of your age are not likely to believe in ghosts, nor inclined to consider the subject as worthy of attention. The first things necessary to understand are the philosophical and literary relations of the topic. Let me tell you that it would be a mistake to suppose that the stories of the supernatural have had their day in fine literature. On the contrary, wherever fine literature is being produced, either in poetry or in prose, you will find the supernatural element very much alive. Scientific knowledge has not at all diminished the pleasure of mankind in this field of imagination, though it may have considerably changed the methods of treatment. The success of writers today like Maeterlinck is chiefly explained by their skill in the treatment of the ghostly, and of subjects related to supernatural fear. But without citing other living writers, let me observe that there is scarcely any really great author in European literature, old or new, who

has not distinguished himself in the treatment of the supernatural. In English literature, I believe there is no exception — even from the time of the Anglo-Saxon poets to Shakespeare, and from Shakespeare to our own day. And this introduces us to the consideration of a general and remarkable fact, a fact that I do not remember to have seen in any books, but which is of very great philosophical importance; there is something ghostly in all great art, whether of literature, music, sculpture, or architecture.

But now let me speak to you about this word "ghostly"; it is a much bigger word, perhaps, than some of you imagine. The old English had no other word for "spiritual" or "supernatural" — which two terms, you know, are not English but Latin. Everything that religion today calls divine, holy, miraculous, was sufficiently explained for the old Anglo-Saxons by the term ghostly. They spoke of a man's ghost, instead of speaking of his spirit or soul; and everything relating to religious knowledge they called ghostly. In the modern formula of the Catholic confession, which has remained almost unchanged for nearly two thousand years, you will find that the priest is always called a "ghostly" father — which means that his business is to take care of the ghosts or souls of men as a father does. In addressing the priest, the penitent really calls him "Father of

my ghost." You will see, therefore, that a very large meaning really attaches to the adjective. It means everything relating to the supernatural. It means to the Christian even God himself, for the Giver of Life is always called in English the Holy Ghost.

Accepting the evolutional philosophy which teaches that the modern idea of God as held by western nations is really but a development from the primitive belief in a shadow-soul, the term ghost in its reference to the Supreme Being certainly could not be found fault with. On the contrary, there is a weirdness about this use of the word which adds greatly to its solemnity. But whatever belief we have, or have not, as regards religious creeds, one thing that modern science has done for us, is to prove beyond all question that everything which we used to consider material and solid is essentially ghostly, as is any ghost. If we do not believe in old-fashioned stories and theories about ghosts, we are nevertheless obliged to recognize today that we are ghosts of ourselves — and utterly incomprehensible. The mystery of the universe is now weighing upon us, becoming heavier and heavier, more and more awful, as our knowledge expands, and it is especially a ghostly mystery. All great art reminds us in some way of this universal riddle; that is why I say that all great art has something ghostly in it.

It touches something within us which relates to infinity. When you read a very great thought, when you see a wonderful picture or statue or building, and when you hear certain kinds of music, you feel a thrill in the heart and mind much like the thrill which in all times men felt when they thought they saw a ghost or a god. Only the modern thrill is incomparably larger and longer and deeper. And this is why, in spite of all knowledge, the world still finds pleasure in the literature of the supernatural, and will continue to find pleasure in it for hundreds of years to come. The ghostly represents always some shadow of truth, and no amount of disbelief in what used to be called ghosts can ever diminish human interest in what relates to that truth.

So you will see that the subject is not altogether trifling. Certainly it is of very great moment in relation to great literature. The poet or the story-teller who cannot give the reader a little ghostly pleasure at times never can be either a really great writer or a great thinker. I have already said that I know of no exception to this rule in the whole of English literature. Take, for instance, Macaulay, the most practical, hard-headed, logical writer of the century, the last man in whom you would expect to find the least trace of superstition. Had you read only certain

of his essays, you would scarcely think him capable of touching the chords of the supernatural. But he has done this in a masterly way in several of the "Lays of Ancient Rome"— for example, in speaking of the apparition of the Twin Brethren at the battle of Lake Regillus, and of Tarquin haunted by the phantom of his victim Lucretia. Both of these passages give the ghostly thrill in a strong way; and there is a fainter thrill of the same sort to be experienced from the reading of parts of the "Prophecy of Capys." It is because Macaulay had this power, though using it sparingly, that his work is so great. If he had not been able to write these lines of poetry which I referred to, he could not even have made his history of England the living history that it is. A man who has no ghostly feeling cannot make anything alive, not even a page of history or a page of oratory. To touch men's souls, you must know all that those souls can be made to feel by words; and to know that, you must yourself have a "ghost" in you that can be touched in the same way.

Now leaving the theoretical for the practical part of the theme, let us turn to the subject of the relation between ghosts and dreams.

No good writer — no great writer — ever takes a study of the supernatural according to anything which has been done before by other

writers. This is one of those subjects upon which you cannot get real help from books. It is not from books, nor from traditions, nor from legends, nor from anything of that kind that you can learn how to give your reader a ghostly thrill. I do not mean that it is of no use for you to read what has been written upon the subject, so far as mere methods of expression, mere effects of literary workmanship, are concerned. On the contrary, it is very important that you should read all you can of what is good in literature upon these subjects; you will learn from them a great deal about curious values of words, about compactness and power of sentences, about peculiarities of beliefs and of terrors relating to those beliefs. But you must never try to use another man's ideas or feelings, taken from a book, in order to make a supernatural effect. If you do, the work will never be sincere, and will never make a thrill. You must use your own ideas and feelings only, under all possible circumstances. And where are you to get these ideas and feelings from, if you do not believe in ghosts? From your dreams. Whether you believe in ghosts or not, all the artistic elements of ghostly literature exist in your dreams, and form a veritable treasury of literary material for the man that knows how to use them.

All the great effects obtained by poets and story

writers, and even by religious teachers, in the treatment of supernatural fear or mystery, have been obtained, directly or indirectly, through dreams. Study any great ghost story in any literature, and you will find that no matter how surprising or unfamiliar the incidents seem, a little patient examination will prove to you that every one of them has occurred, at different times, in different combinations, in dreams of your own. They give you a thrill. But why? Because they remind you of experiences, imaginative or emotional, which you had forgotten. There can be no exception to this rule — absolutely none. I was speaking to you the other day about a short story by Bulwer Lytton, as being the best ghost story in the English language. The reason why it is the best story of this kind is simply because it represents with astonishing faithfulness the experiences of nightmare. The terror of all great stories of the supernatural is really the terror of nightmare, projected into waking consciousness. And the beauty or tenderness of other ghost stories or fairy-stories, or even of certain famous and delightful religious legends, is the tenderness and beauty of dreams of a happier kind, dreams inspired by love or hope or regret. But in all cases where the supernatural is well treated in literature, dream experience is the source of the treatment. I know that I am now speaking to an

audience acquainted with literature of which I know practically nothing. But I believe that there can be no exception to these rules even in the literature of the Far East. I do not mean to say that there may not be in Chinese and in Japanese literature many ghost stories which are not derived from dream-experience. But I will say that if there are any of this kind, they are not worth reading, and cannot belong to any good class of literature. I have read translations of a number of Chinese ghost stories in French, also a wonderful English translation of ghostly Chinese stories in two volumes, entitled " Strange Stories from a Chinese Studio " by Herbert Giles. These stories, translated by a great scholar, are very wonderful; but I noticed that in every successful treatment of a supernatural subject, the incidents of the story invariably correspond with the phenomena of dreams. Therefore I think that I cannot be mistaken in my judgment of the matter. Such Japanese stories as I could get translations of, obeyed the same rule. The other day, in a story which I read for the first time, I was very much interested to find an exact parallel between the treatment of a supernatural idea by the Japanese author, and by the best English author of dream studies. The story was about a picture, painted upon a screen, representing a river and a landscape. In the Japanese story (perhaps it

has a Chinese origin) the painter makes a sign to the screen; and a little boat begins to sail down the river, and sails out of the picture into the room, and the room becomes full of water, and the painter, or magician, or whoever he is, gets into the boat and sails away into the picture again, and disappears forever. This is exactly, in every detail, a dream story, and the excellence of it is in its truth to dream experience. The same phenomena you will find, under another form, in "Alice in Wonderland," and "Through the Looking Glass."

But to return to the point where we left off. I was saying that all successful treatment of the ghostly or the impossible must be made to correspond as much as possible with the truth of dream experience, and that Bulwer Lytton's story of the haunted house illustrates the rule. Let us now consider especially the literary value of nightmare. Nightmare, the most awful form of dream, is also one of the most peculiar. It has probably furnished all the important elements of religious and supernatural terror which are to be found in really great literature. It is a mysterious thing in itself; and scientific psychology has not yet been able to explain many facts in regard to it. We can take the phenomena of nightmare separately, one by one, and show their curious relation to

various kinds of superstitious fear and supernatural belief.

The first remarkable fact in nightmare is the beginning of it. It begins with a kind of suspicion, usually. You feel afraid without knowing why. Then you have the impression that something is acting upon you from a distance — something like fascination, yet not exactly fascination, for there may be no visible fascinator. But feeling uneasy, you wish to escape, to get away from the influence that is making you afraid. Then you find it is not easy to escape. You move with great difficulty. Presently the difficulty increases — you cannot move at all. You want to cry out, and you cannot; you have lost your voice. You are actually in a state of trance — seeing, hearing, feeling, but unable to move or speak. This is the beginning. It forms one of the most terrible emotions from which a man can suffer. If it continued more than a certain length of time, the mere fear might kill. Nightmare does sometimes kill, in cases where the health has been very much affected by other causes.

Of course we have nothing in ordinary waking life of such experience — the feeling of being deprived of will and held fast from a great distance by some viewless power. This is the real experience of magnetism, mesmerism; and it is

the origin of certain horrible beliefs of the Middle Ages in regard to magical power. Suppose we call it supernatural mesmerism, for want of a better word. It is not true mesmerism, because in real hypnotic conditions, the patient does not feel or think or act mentally according to his own personality; he acts by the will of another. In nightmare the will is only suspended, and the personal consciousness remains; this is what makes the horror of it. So we shall call the first stage supernatural mesmerism, only with the above qualification. Now let us see how Bulwer Lytton uses this experience in his story.

A man is sitting in a chair, with a lamp on the table beside him, and is reading Macaulay's essays, when he suddenly becomes uneasy. A shadow falls upon the page. He rises, and tries to call; but he cannot raise his voice above a whisper. He tries to move; and he cannot stir hand or foot. The spell is already upon him. This is the first part of nightmare.

The second stage of the phenomenon, which sometimes mingles with the first stage, is the experience of terrible and unnatural appearances. There is always a darkening of the visible, sometimes a disappearance or dimming of the light. In Bulwer Lytton's story there is a fire burning in the room, and a very bright lamp. Gradually both lamp and fire become dimmer and dimmer;

at last all light completely vanishes, and the room becomes absolutely dark, except for spectral and unnatural luminosities that begin to make their appearance. This also is a very good study of dream experience. The third stage of nightmare, the final struggle, is chiefly characterized by impossible occurrences, which bring to the dreamer the extreme form of horror, while convincing him of his own impotence. For example, you try to fire a pistol or to use a steel weapon. If a pistol, the bullet will not project itself more than a few inches from the muzzle; then it drops down limply, and there is no report. If a sword or dagger, the blade becomes soft, like cotton or paper. Terrible appearances, monstrous or unnatural figures, reach out hands to touch; if human figures, they will grow to the ceiling, and bend themselves fantastically as they approach. There is one more stage, which is not often reached — the climax of the horror. That is when you are caught or touched. The touch in nightmare is a very peculiar sensation, almost like an electric shock, but unnaturally prolonged. It is not pain, but something worse than pain, an experience never felt in waking hours.

The third and fourth stages have been artistically mixed together by Bulwer Lytton. The phantom towers from floor to ceiling, vague and threatening; the man attempts to use a weapon,

and at the same time receives a touch or shock that renders him absolutely powerless. He describes the feeling as resembling the sensation of some ghostly electricity. The study is exactly true to dream-experience. I need not here mention this story further, since from this point a great many other elements enter into it which, though not altogether foreign to our subject, do not illustrate that subject so well as some of the stories of Poe. Poe has given us other peculiar details of nightmare-experience, such as horrible sounds. Often we hear in such dreams terrible muffled noises, as of steps coming. This you will find very well studied in the story called "The Fall of the House of Usher." Again in these dreams inanimate objects either become alive, or suggest to us, by their motion, the hiding of some horrible life behind them — curtains, for example, doors left half open, alcoves imperfectly closed. Poe has studied these in "Eleonora" and in some other sketches.

Dreams of the terrible have beyond question had a good deal to do with the inspiration both of religious and of superstitious literature. The returning of the dead, visions of heavenly or infernal beings,— these, when well described, are almost always exact reproductions of dream-experience. But occasionally we find an element of waking fear mixed with them — for example, in

one of the oldest ghost stories of the world, the story in "The Book of Job." The poet speaks of feeling intense cold, and feeling the hairs of his head stand up with fear. These experiences are absolutely true, and they belong to waking life. The sensation of cold and the sensation of horror are not sensations of dreams. They come from extraordinary terror felt in active existence, while we are awake. You will observe the very same signs of fear in a horse, a dog, or a cat — and there is reason to suppose that in these animal cases, also, supernatural fear is sometimes a cause. I have seen a dog — a brave dog, too — terribly frightened by seeing a mass of paper moved by a slight current of air. This slight wind did not reach the place where the dog was lying; he could not therefore associate the motion of the paper with a motion of the wind; he did not understand what was moving the paper; the mystery alarmed him, and the hair on his back stood up with fear. But the mingling of such sensations of waking fear with dream sensations of fear, in a story or poem, may be very effectually managed, so as to give to the story an air of reality, of actuality, which could not be obtained in any other way. A great many of our old fairy ballads and goblin stories mixed the two experiences together with the most excellent results. I should say that the fine German story of "Undine" is a good example of

this kind. The sight of the faces in the water of the river, the changing of waterfalls and cataracts into ghostly people, the rising from the closed well of the form of Undine herself, the rising of the flood behind her, and the way in which she "weeps her lover to death"— all this is pure dream; and it seems real because most of us have had some such experiences of fancy in our own dreams. But the other part of the story dealing with human emotions, fears, passions — these are of waking life, and the mixture is accomplished in a most artistic way. Speaking of Undine obliges me also to speak of Undine's predecessors in mediaeval literature — the mediaeval spirits, the *succubæ* and *incubi,* the sylphs and salamanders or salamandrines, the whole wonderful goblin population of water, air, forest, and fire. All the good stories about them are really dream studies. And coming down to the most romantic literature of our own day, the same thing must be said of those strange and delightful stories by Gautier, "La Morte Amoureuse," "Arria Marcella," "Le Pied de Momie." The most remarkable is perhaps "La Morte Amoureuse"; but there is in this a study of double personality, which complicates it too much for purposes of present illustration. I shall therefore speak of "Arria Marcella" instead. Some young students visit the city of Pompeii, to study the ruins and the

curiosities preserved in the museum of Naples, nearby. All of them are familiar with classic literature and classic history; moreover, they are artists, able to appreciate the beauty of what they see. At the time of the eruption, which occurred nearly two thousand years ago, many people perished by being smothered under the rain of ashes; but their bodies were encased in the deposit so that the form was perfectly preserved as in a mould. Some of these moulds are to be seen in the museum mentioned; and one is the mould of the body of a beautiful young woman. The younger of the three students sees this mould, and romantically wishes that he could see and love the real person, so many centuries dead. That night, while his companions are asleep, he leaves his room and wanders into the ruined city, for the pleasure of thinking all by himself. But presently, as he turns the corner of a street, he finds that the city looks quite different from what it had appeared by day; the houses seem to have grown taller; they look new, bright, clean. While he is thus wandering, suddenly the sun rises, and the streets fill with people — not the people of today, but the people of two thousand years ago, all dressed in the old Greek and Roman costumes. After a time a young Greek comes up to the student and speaks to him in Latin. He has learned enough Latin at the university to be able to answer, and

a conversation begins, of which the result is that he is invited to the theatre of Pompeii to see the gladiators and other amusements of the time. While in this theatre, he suddenly sees the woman that he wanted to see, the woman whose figure was preserved in the Naples museum. After the theatre, he is invited to her house; and everything is very delightful until suddenly the girl's father appears on the scene. The old man is a Christian, and he is very angry that the ghost of his daughter should receive a young man in this manner. He makes a sign of the cross, and immediately poor Arria crumbles into dust, and the young man finds himself alone in the ruins of Pompeii. Very beautiful this story is; but every detail in it is dream study. I have given so much mention to it only because it seems to me the very finest French example of this artistic use of dream experience. But how many other romances belong to the same category? I need only mention among others Irving's "The Adalantado of the Seven Cities," which is pure dream, so realistically told that it gives the reader the sensation of being asleep. Although such romances as "The Seven Sleepers," "Rip Van Winkle," and "Urashima," are not, on the other hand, pure dreams, yet the charm of them is just in that part where dream experience is used. The true romance in all is in the old man's dream of being young, and wak-

ing up to cold and grave realities. By the way, in the old French lays of Marie de France, there is an almost precisely similar story to the Japanese one — similar, at least, at all points except the story of the tortoise. It is utterly impossible that the oriental and the occidental story-tellers could have, either of them, borrowed from the other; more probably each story is a spontaneous growth. But it is curious to find the legend substantially the same in other literatures — Indian and Arabian and Javanese. In all of the versions the one romantic truth is ever the same — a dream truth.

Now besides the artistic elements of terror and of romance, dreams certainly furnish us with the most penetrating and beautiful qualities of ghostly tenderness that literature contains. For the dead people that we loved all come back to us occasionally in dreams, and look and talk as if they were actually alive, and become to us everything that we could have wished them to be. In a dream-meeting with the dead, you must have observed how everything is gentle and beautiful, and yet how real, how true it seems. From the most ancient times such visions of the dead have furnished literature with the most touching and the most exquisite passages of unselfish affection. We find this experience in nearly all the ancient ballad-literature of Europe; we find it in all the world's

epics; we find it in every kind of superior poetry; and modern literature draws from it more and more as the years go by. Even in such strange compositions as the " Kalevala " of the Finns, an epic totally unlike any other ever written in this world, the one really beautiful passage in an emotional sense is the coming back of the dead mother to comfort the wicked son, which is a dream study, though not so represented in the poem.

Yet one thing more. Our dreams of heaven, what are they in literature but reflections in us of the more beautiful class of dreams? In the world of sleep all the dead people we loved meet us again; the father recovers his long-buried child, the husband his lost wife, separated lovers find the union that was impossible in this world, those whom we lost sight of in early years — dead sisters, brothers, friends — all come back to us just as they were then, just as loving, and as young, and perhaps even more beautiful than they could really have been. In the world of sleep there is no growing old; there is immortality, there is everlasting youth. And again how soft, how happy everything is; even the persons unkind to us in waking life become affectionate to us in dreams. Well, what is heaven but this? Religion in painting perfect happiness for the good, only describes the best of our dream-life, which is also the best of our waking life; and I think

you will find that the closer religion has kept to dream experience in these descriptions, the happier has been the result. Perhaps you will say that I have forgotten how religion teaches the apparition of supernatural powers of a very peculiar kind. But I think that you will find the suggestion for these powers also in dream-life. Do we not pass through the air in dreams, pass through solid substances, perform all kinds of miracles, achieve all sorts of impossible things? I think we do. At all events, I am certain that when, as men-of-letters, you have to deal with any form of supernatural subject — whether terrible, or tender, or pathetic, or splendid — you will do well, if you have a good imagination, not to trust to books for your inspiration. Trust to your own dream-life; study it carefully, and draw your inspiration from that. For dreams are the primary source of almost everything that is beautiful in the literature which treats of what lies beyond mere daily experience.

CHAPTER V

THE QUESTION OF THE HIGHEST ART

In taking this title for the present short lecture, I have not said "literary art," but simply art. That is because I think that all the arts are so related to each other, and to some form of highest truth, that each obeys the same laws as the others, and manifests the same principles. Of course I intend to refer especially to literary art; but in order to do this effectually, I must first speak about art in general.

I take it that art signifies the emotional expression of life in some form or other. This may be expressed in music, in painting, in sculpture, in poetry, in drama, or in fiction. Truth to life is the object even of the best fiction — though the story in itself may not be true, or may even be impossible. But it has of course been said that the kinds of art are almost innumerable. The question that I want to answer is this. What is the highest form of art?

Without attempting to discuss the different kinds of art in any way, I think we may fairly assume that intellectual life represents something higher than physical life, and that ethical life

represents something higher still. In short, the position of Spencer that moral beauty is far superior to intellectual beauty, ought to be a satisfactory guide to the answer of this question. If moral beauty be the very highest possible form of beauty, then the highest possible form of art should be that which expresses it.

I do not think that anybody would deny these premises from a philosophical point of view. But the mere statement that moral beauty ought to be ranked above all other beauty, and that the highest art should necessarily express moral beauty, leaves a vague and unsatisfactory impression upon the mind. It is not very easy to answer the question, How can music or painting or sculpture or poetry or fiction represent moral beauty? And have I not often told you that books written for a moral purpose are nearly always inartistic and unsatisfactory?

It seems to me that a solution of this difficulty is at least suggested by the experience of love.

To love another human being is really a moral experience, although this fact is very commonly overlooked. You might say, That is all very fine, but how can it be a moral experience to love a bad person, or to love for sense and self? I shall answer that the selfish side of the feeling has no importance at all; and that whether the person loved be good or bad or indifferent is also of

no importance. I mean that the experience is not at all affected as to its moral side by the immorality of the conditions of it. Certainly it is a great misfortune and a great folly to love a bad person; but in spite of the misfortune and the folly a certain moral experience comes, which has immense value to a wholesome nature. The experience is one which very few of the poets and philosophers dwell upon; yet it is the only important, the supremely important, part of the experience. What is it? It is the sudden impulse to unselfishness. For there are two sides to every passion of love in a normal human life. One side is selfish; the other side, and the stronger, is unselfish. In other words, one of the first results of truly loving another human being is the sudden wish to die for the sake of that person, to endure anything, to attempt anything difficult or dangerous for the benefit of the person beloved. That is what Tennyson refers to in the celebrated verse about the chord of Self suddenly disappearing. The impulse to self-sacrifice is the moral experience of loving; and this experience is not necessarily confined to the kind of affection described by Tennyson. Other forms of love may produce the same result. Strong faith may do it. Patriotism may do it. I have only mentioned the ordinary form of love, because it is the most universal experience, and most likely to produce the

moral impulse, the unselfish desire to suffer pain, to suffer loss, or even to suffer death, for the sake of a person loved.

I know that mere beauty of form may produce such emotion, though beauty of form is by no means the highest source of moral inspiration. There is a possible relation between physical and moral beauty; but it does not seem to be a relation now often realized in this imperfect world. Intellectual beauty never, I think, excites our affection — though it may excite our admiration. Moral beauty, the highest of all, has indeed been a supreme source of unselfish action; but it has moved men's minds chiefly through superhuman ideals, and very seldom through the words or acts of a person, an individual. It must be confessed that in a person we are much more ready to perceive the lower than the higher forms of beauty.

But in this we have a suggestion of possible values in regard to future art. Taking it for granted that some forms of beauty inspire men with such affection as to make them temporarily unselfish, I do not see any reason to doubt that in future very much higher forms of beauty will produce the same effect. I should say that the highest form of art must necessarily be such art as produces upon the beholder the same moral effect that the passion of love produces in a generous lover. Such art would be a revelation of moral

beauty for which it were worth while to sacrifice self,— of moral ideas for which it were a beautiful thing to die. Such an art ought to fill men even with a passionate desire to give up life, pleasure, everything, for the sake of some grand and noble purpose. Just as unselfishness is the real test of strong affection, so unselfishness ought to be the real test of the very highest kind of art. Does this art make you feel generous, make you willing to sacrifice yourself, make you eager to attempt some noble undertaking? If it does, then it belongs to the higher class of art, if not to the very highest. But if a work of art, whether sculpture or painting or poem or drama, does not make us feel kindly, more generous, morally better than we were before seeing it, then I should say that, no matter how clever, it does not belong to the highest forms of art.

By this statement I do not mean in the least to decry such art as the sculpture of the Greeks, as the painting of the Italians — not at all. The impression of great sculpture and a great painting, like the impression of grand music, *is* to make us feel more kindly to our fellowmen, more unselfish in our action, more exalted in our aspirations. When art has not this effect, it is often because the nature of man is deficient, not because his art is bad. But I do not know that any art which has existed in the past could be called the highest

possible. The highest possible ought to be, I think, one that treats of ethical ideals, not physical ideals, and of which the effect should be a purely moral enthusiasm. Sculpture, painting, music,—these arts can never, I imagine, attempt the highest art in the sense that I mean. But drama, poetry, great romance or fiction, in other words, great literature, may attempt the supreme, and very probably will do so at some future time.

CHAPTER VI

TOLSTOI'S THEORY OF ART

Last year I gave a short lecture in regard to a new theory of art, suggesting that the highest form of any kind of art ought to have the effect of exciting a noble enthusiasm and a sincere desire of self-sacrifice. I compared the ideal effect of such an art with the emotional effect of first love upon a generous mind, observing that the real influence of a generous passion is intensely moral, that it creates a desire to sacrifice self. But at that time I had not read Tolstoi's famous essay upon the very same subject. That essay reinforces a great many truths that I have tried to dwell upon in other lectures; and no book of the present time has excited so much furious discussion. So I think that it is quite important enough to talk about today. As university students it is necessary that you should be fully acquainted with what is going on in the literary world; and the appearance of Tolstoi's book (it first appeared only in the form of magazine essays) is a very great literary event. It is entitled in the French version, "*Qu'est ce que l'Art?*"

Before going any further, I must warn you

not to allow yourselves to be prejudiced against the theory by anything in the way of criticism made upon it. One of the most important things for a literary student to learn is not to allow his judgment to be formed by other people's opinions. I have to lecture to you hoping that you will keep to this rule even in regard to my own opinion. Do not think that something is good or bad, merely because I say so, but try to find out for yourself by unprejudiced reading and thinking whether I am right or wrong. In the case of Tolstoi, the criticisms have been so fierce and in some respects so well founded, that even I hesitated for a moment to buy the book. But I suspected very soon that any book capable of making half the world angry on the subject of art must be a book of great power. Indeed, it is rather a good sign that a man is worth something, when thousands of people abuse him simply for his opinions. And now, having read the book, I find that I was quite right in my reflections. It is a very great book, but you must be prepared for startling errors in it, extraordinary misjudgments, things that really deserve harsh criticism. Many great thinkers are as weak in some one direction as they happen to be strong in another. Ruskin, who could not really understand Greek art, and who resembled Tolstoi in many ways, was a man of this kind, inclined to abuse what he

did not understand, Japanese art not less than Greek art. About Greek art one of his judgments clearly proves the limitation of his faculty. He said that the Venus de Medici was a very uninteresting little person. Tolstoi has said more extraordinary things than that; he has no liking for Shakespeare, for Dante, for other men whose fame has been established for centuries. He denies at once whole schools of literature, whole schools of painting and whole schools of music. If the wrong things which he has said were picked out of his book and printed on a page all by themselves (this has been done by some critics), you would think after reading that page that Tolstoi had become suddenly insane. But you must not mind these blemishes. Certain giants must never be judged by their errors, but only by their strength, and in spite of all faults the book is a book which will make anybody think in a new and generous way. Moreover, it is utterly sincere and unselfish — the author denouncing even his own work, the wonderful books of his youth, which won for him the very highest place among modern novelists. These, he now tells us, are not works of art.

There is a qualification to be made in regard to all this. Tolstoi does not deny that most art that he condemns is art in a narrow sense; he means that it is not good art, not the best, and

therefore ought not to be praised. This being understood, I can better begin to explain his doctrine.

The first position which he takes is about as follows: A great deal of what has been called great art cannot be understood except by educated people. You must be educated and refined in a considerable degree, in order to understand the beauty of a Greek gem or statue, an elaborate piece of music, or a supreme piece of modern poetry. You must be trained to understand the beauty of what modern society calls beautiful. Take a peasant from the people, and show to him a great painting, or repeat to him a great poem, or make him listen to a grand piece of harmonized music; and then ask him what he thinks of these things. As a sincere man, he will tell you that he prefers to look at the picture in his village church, to hear the songs of beggar-minstrels, or to listen to a piece of dance music. This is unquestionable fact; nobody can deny it.

But the substance of a nation in any country, the mass of its humanity, is not cultured, is not rich, is not refined; it consists of peasants and workers, not of fine ladies and gentlemen. The cultivated class must always be small; the majority of a nation must always remain workers. And according to the common acceptation and practice of art, art is something which only the highly

educated and wealthy can be made to understand and to enjoy. Therefore art is something with which nine-tenths at least, of the human race, can have nothing to do!

Yet what of the alleged inferiority of the masses? Are they really inferior beings, are they unsusceptible to the highest and best emotions? What are these highest and best emotions that artists talk so much about? Are they not loyalty, love, duty, resignation, patience, courage — everything that means the strength of the race and the goodness of it? Has the peasant no loyalty, no love, no courage, no patience, no patriotism? Or, rather is it not the peasant who is most willing to give his life for his emperor and his country, to sacrifice himself for the sake of others, to do in time of danger the greatest deeds of heroism, to sacrifice himself in time of peace for the sake of others, to obey under all circumstances? Is it not the peasant really who loves most? Who is the best of husbands and fathers? Who, in all that makes religion worth having, is the most devout of believers? Tell the real truth, and acknowledge that the peasant is morally a better man than the average of the noble and wealthy. He is emotionally better, and he is better in the strength of his character. Where do we find what is called human goodness? Where are we to go to look for everyday examples of every virtue?

Is it among the wealthy people of cities, or is it among the people of the country, the people who cannot understand art? There is only one answer to this question, and it is the same answer that Ruskin made a long time ago. The poor are as a whole the best people. If you want to look for holiness in the sense of human goodness, you must look for it among the poor. Everything noble in the emotional life is there. The evil devices and follies of a few do not signify; the great mass of the people are good.

Well, the great mass of the people have nothing to do with art, though they are good. But what is art? It is the power to convey emotion by means of words, music, colour or form; it is the means of making people feel truth and beauty through their senses. And the common people cannot understand art! Then must we suppose that they have no sense of truth and beauty? Have we not already been obliged to recognize that the best of human emotion belongs to them? And if the mass of the people really possess every noble emotion, and if our so-called art cannot touch their hearts and their minds, where is the fault? It cannot be in the people; it must be in the art.

This leads to another question — is it really true that what we have been calling great art appeals to the best emotions of mankind? It can-

not be true, Tolstoi boldly answers. If it were true, then the people would be touched by it. They are not touched by it; they do not understand it; they do not like it. That is proof positive that it does not appeal to noble emotions. Then what does it appeal to? At this point of the essay Tolstoi's criticism is most telling and most terrible, though weakened by occasional mistakes. What we have been calling art, he says, appeals to sensualism and lust; but the peasant is chaste. He does not care for pictures of naked women, nor statues of nudity in any form; neither does he care for stories or poems suggesting sensuality. Sensualism is really weakness; the perfectly strong man cannot be a sensualist — his life is too normal and too natural; if you like, he is too good an animal to be unchaste. Most animals are chaste. But Western art, Greek art, Italian art, French art, has been through all these centuries unchaste, appealing only to the sex-instincts of the beholder. There are exceptions, no doubt, but in this way of considering the meaning of art we must consider the dominant tone. I am afraid that Tolstoi is quite right about that. I do not think that any one can controvert him.

Next, let us take literature. The peasant cannot understand fine literature; it makes no appeal to him. He has a very simple literature of his own, full of beauty — touching songs and touch-

ing stories about human virtue, and our best critics acknowledge that any poet can obtain the best and truest inspiration from the literature of despised peasants. You cannot say that the peasant is incapable of feeling literary emotion — on the contrary, he can give it, he can teach it; in England he taught it to every English poet since the time of Walter Scott, and to many before that time. The very greatest of Scotch singers was a poor farmer. So we must acknowledge that a peasant is no stranger to the highest form of literary emotion. But our fine literature, our literature of educated men, cannot interest him at all. Therefore, the fault must be in the art, not in the peasant. So let us consider what is the nature of these noble emotions which our highest literary art is supposed to express and to teach.

Here again we have Tolstoi's terrible criticism. Our greatest plays are plays on the subject of crime, murder, lust, adultery, treachery, everything horrible in human nature. Our novels, for the great majority, are stories of social life written with a view to keeping the sexual feelings of the reader slightly excited. Our poems have been for hundreds of years, a great majority of them, about sexual love, or about a foolish passion of some kind. I am only expressing Tolstoi's view very briefly; it would surprise you to discover how he masses great names together in this con-

demnation, and how very right he seems to me to be in spite of it; and then he tells us, "You never can appeal to the honest mass of people, you never can touch their hearts, with stories of lust and crime and luxury. They are too good to find pleasure in such things."

I will not dwell upon his arraignment of modern music and other branches of art, because the above illustrations are strong enough. His conclusion is this: "If art be the means of expressing and conveying emotion, then the noblest art must be that which expresses and conveys the noblest form of emotion. Now the noblest emotions are emotions shared by all men; and true art should be able to appeal to all men, not to a class only. The proof that modern art is not great art, the proof that it is even bad art, is that the common people cannot understand it."

We now come face to face with two serious objections.

First, you may say that the reason common people cannot understand great art is simply this, that they are stupid and ignorant. How can they comprehend a great work of literature when they cannot understand the language of literature? They can read only very simple things; to read a great poem or a great work of fiction requires a knowledge of the language of the edu-

cated. Common people, not being educated, of course cannot understand.

Very bravely does Tolstoi face this objection. He answers that the so-called language of the educated ought not to be used in a great work of art. A great work ought to be written in the language of the people, which is really the language of the country and of the nation, whereas the language of the educated is a special artificial thing, like the language of medicine, the language of botany, or the language of any special science. And he tells us that he thinks it selfish and wicked and unreasonable to make literature inaccessible to the people by writing it in a special idiom which the people cannot understand. Moreover, he says that the greatest books of the world have never been written in a special literary language, but in the common language of the common people. To illustrate this he quotes the great religious books and great religious poems, the Bible and the books of Buddhism which, in the time of their composition, must have been produced in the living tongue, not in a special language. What reason can possibly be offered except a reason of prejudice for making literature incomprehensible to the masses? It is no use to say that with common language you cannot express the same ideas which you are in the habit of ex-

pressing through literary language. If you think you cannot utter great thoughts in simple speech, that is because of bad training, bad habits, false education. The greatest thoughts and the deepest ever uttered, have been written in religious books and in the language of the people. In short, Tolstoi's position is that the whole system of literary education is wrong from top to bottom. And this statement is worth thinking about.

Let me give you a quotation, showing his views about the incomprehensibility of art:

"To say that a work of art is good, and that it is nevertheless incomprehensible to the majority of men, is just as if one were to say of a certain kind of food that it is good, but that the majority of mankind ought to be careful not to eat it. The majority of men, doubtless, may not like to eat rotten cheese or what is called in England 'high' game — that is, the flesh of game which has been allowed to become a little putrid — meat much esteemed by men of perverted taste; but bread and fruits are only good when they please the taste of the majority of mankind. And in the case of art it is just the same thing. Perverted art cannot please the majority of mankind; but good art should of necessity be something capable of pleasing everybody."

Now let me give you an interesting quotation

which illustrates the degree to which what is now called great art seems unnatural to common people:

"Among people who have not yet become perverted by the false theories of our modern society, among artisans and among children, for example, nature has created a very clear idea of what deserves to be blamed or to be praised. According to the instincts of the common people and of children, praise rightly belongs only to great physical force"— as in the case of Hercules, of heroes, of conquerors —"or else to moral force"— as in the case of Sakya-Muni, renouncing beauty and power for the sake of saving man, or the case of Christ dying upon the Cross for our benefit, or as in the case of the saints and the martyrs. These ideas are ideas of the most perfect kind. Simple and frankly honest souls understand very well that it is impossible not to respect physical force, because physical force is a thing that of itself compels respect; and they also cannot help equally respecting moral force — the moral strength of the man who works for the sake of good; they feel themselves attracted toward the beauty of moral force by their whole inner nature. "These simple minds perceive that there actually exist in this world men who are more respected than the men respected for physical or moral force — they per-

ceive that there are men more respected, more admired, and better rewarded than all the heroes of strength or of moral good, and this merely because they know how to sing, how to dance, or how to write poems. A peasant can understand that Alexander the Great or Genghis Kahn or Napoleon were really great men; he understands that because he knows that any one of them would have been able to annihilate him and thousands of his followers. He can also understand that Buddha, Socrates, and Christ were great men, because he feels and knows that he himself and all other men ought to try to be like them. But how is it that a man can be called great merely for having written poems about the love of woman? That is a thing which, by no manner of means, could he ever be made to understand."

Elsewhere he gives a still more amusing illustration. The common people, he says, are accustomed to look at statues of divinities, angels, saints, gods, or heroes. They understand quite well the reason for such images. But when they hear that a statue has been set up to honour a man like Baudelaire, who wrote poems of lust or despair, or when they hear of a statue set up in memory of a man who knew how to play the fiddle, that appears to them utterly monstrous. And perhaps it is.

I have thought of a second strong objection to Tolstoi's position, an objection which he himself has not dwelt on — a philosophical objection. It is customary now-a-days to consider superior intelligence as connected with a superior nervous system. Many persons, I am sure, would be ready to say that the common people cannot understand high art, because of the inferiority of their nervous system. Compared with educated and wealthy people, they are supposed to be dull, therefore incapable of feeling beauty. They live, in Europe at least, among miserable conditions of dirt and bad smells. How could they appreciate the delicate fine art of civilization? I say that many persons would argue in this way, but no clear thinker would do so. As a matter of fact, in modern Europe the best thinkers, the best artists, the best scholars, really come from the peasant class. Some farmers have been able with the greatest difficulty to give their children a better education than the average. Even in the great English universities some of the highest honours have been taken by men of this kind, proving as Spencer said long ago that the foundation of a strong mind is a strong body. I know what Tolstoi would say about the aesthetic refinement of the nervous system. He would simply say that what is called exquisite nervous sensibility is nothing more than hyper-aesthesia —

that is, a diseased condition of the nerves. But leaving this matter aside, let me seriously ask a question. Is a common peasant of the poorest class really insensible to beauty? Or what kind of beauty shall we take for a test? The European standard of art holds the perception of human beauty to be the highest test-mark of aesthetic ability. Is the common man, the most common and ignorant man of the people, insensible to human beauty? Is he less capable, for example, of judging the beauty of woman than the most accomplished of artists? Now I do not know what you will think of my statement; but I do not hesitate for a moment to say that the best judge of beauty in the world is the comman man of the people. I do not mean that every man of that class is better than others; but I mean that the quickest and best judges of either a man or a woman are the very same persons who are the quickest and best judges of a horse or a cow.

For after all, what we call beauty or grace in the best and deepest sense, represents physical force, with which the peasant is much better acquainted than we are. He is accustomed to observing life, and he does it instinctively. Beauty means a certain proportion in the skeleton which gives the best results of strength and of easy motion in the animal or the man. Suppose again that we consider the body apart from beauty;

what does it mean? It means the economy of force; that is, a body should be so made that the greatest possible amount of strength and activity is obtained with the least possible amount of substance. To say that a man accustomed to judge an animal cannot judge a human being is utter nonsense. Such a man, in fact, is the best of all judges, and seldom makes a mistake. Now history of course has curious instances of the recognition of this fact by great princes. In the time of the greatest luxury of the Caliphs of Bagdad, when the Prince wished to find a perfectly beautiful woman to be his companion, he did not invariably go to the governors of provinces or to the houses of the nobility in search of such a woman. He went to the wild Arabs of the desert, to the breeders of horses, and asked them to find the girl for him. A memorable example is that of Abdul Malik, the fifth Caliph of the house of Ommayad; he asked a common horse-trader how to choose a beautiful woman, and the man at once answered him, "You must choose a woman whose feet are of such a form, etc."—naming and describing every part of the body and its best points exactly as a horse-trader would describe the best points of a horse. The Caliph was astonished to discover that this rude man knew incomparably more about womanly beauty than all his courtiers and his artists. The fact

is that familiarity with life, with active life, gives the best of all knowledge in the matter of beauty and strength. Once in America I had a curious illustration of what such familiarity can accomplish in another way. At a certain meeting of men from many parts of the country, there came into the assembly a comman man of the poorest class who could tell the exact weight of any one in the assembly. You must remember that every man was fully dressed. All agreed to pay him something for proof of his skill, for it is very difficult to tell the weight and strength of a man in Western clothes. Well, the man took a little box, put it on the ground, and asked each person present to step over it. As each person stepped, he cried out the weight; and the weight was almost exactly as announced in every case. Afterwards I asked him how he did this extraordinary thing. He answered, "When you lift your leg to step over the box, I can see the size and the line of the front muscle of the thigh, and from that I can tell any man's weight." There is a good example of what natural observation means.

But to return, in conclusion, to the subject of this essay. I think it will give you something to think about; and certainly it confirms the truth of one thing which I have often asserted, that the sooner Japanese authors will resign themselves to write in the spoken language of the people,

the better for Japanese literature and for the general dissemination of modern knowledge. I think this book is a very great and noble book; I also think that it is fundamentally true from beginning to end. There are mistakes in it — as, for instance, when Tolstoi speaks of Kipling as an essentially obscure writer, incomprehensible to the people. But Kipling happens to be just the man who speaks to the people. He uses their vernacular. Such little mistakes, due to an imperfect knowledge of a foreign people, do not in the least affect the value of the moral in this teaching. But the reforms advised are at present, of course, impossible. Although I believe Tolstoi is perfectly right, I could not lecture to you — I could not fulfil my duties in this university — by strictly observing his principles. Were I to do that, I should be obliged to tell you that hundreds of books famous in English literature are essentially bad books, and that you ought not to read them at all; whereas I am engaged for the purpose of pointing out to you the literary merits of those very books.

CHAPTER VII

NOTE UPON THE ABUSE AND THE USE OF LITERARY SOCIETIES

As I have been asked, on various occasions, to express an opinion as to the use of literary societies, as well as asked to join some of them, I have been thinking that a short lecture, embodying my beliefs upon the subject, might be of use to you. It is not at all necessary that you should approve my opinions; but I am sure that you will find them worth thinking about, because they are based upon something better than any experience of my own— the experience and the teaching of really wise men. Let me begin, then, by saying that I am strongly opposed to the existence of most literary societies, and that I believe such societies may do very considerable injury to young talents.

There is a general principle, especially insisted upon by Herbert Spencer in his Sociology, which applies to the world of literature just as much as it does to the world of political economy, or the world of industrialism. That principle is this: whatever can be done by the individual in the best way possible, is not work for a society

to attempt, unless this society can greatly improve the work of the individual. You know that sociologists are never tired of pointing out that, even in the case of private companies and state undertakings, the private companies invariably do the better work. Of course the larger social questions connected with competition, lie outside of my province; I am reminding you of them, but I have no wish to dwell upon them. Only remember that the general principle is applicable to all forms of human work and effort. Co-operation is valuable only when it can accomplish what is beyond the power of the individual. When it cannot accomplish this, it is much more likely to make mischief or to act as a check than to do any good. One reason for this is very simple — co-operation is unfavourable to personal freedom of thought or action. If you work with a crowd, you must try to obey the opinions of the majority; you must act in harmony with those about you. How very unfavourable to literary originality such a condition would prove, we shall presently have reason to see.

But first let me observe that all kinds of literary societies are not to be indiscriminately condemned. Some literary societies are very useful, and have accomplished great services to literature, by doing for literature what no individual could possibly do. For example, in England societies

have been formed for the editing and publishing of valuable old texts. The Early English Text Society is an example, one of perhaps a score. No one man could have done the work of this society, nor the work of the Percy Text Society, nor the work of a dozen others of which you have undoubtedly heard. Such work requires a great deal of money, such as very few, even rich men could spare, and it requires a vast amount of labour, beyond the capacity of any single person. Now in these cases hundreds of people contribute money to support the work, and dozens of scholars are thus enabled to concentrate their efforts in a single direction. It would be folly to say that societies of this kind are not of the very highest value. But they are valuable only because they do what individual effort could not do.

Again, societies formed in colleges and in universities, for the purpose of encouraging literary effort, or debating, or any other beginnings in the great arts of composition or of eloquence, are certainly to be recommended. They are to be recommended because they stimulate the novice to do many things which he might not have self-confidence to attempt without encouragement. How many a student must have first discovered his own abilities in the direction of oratory or poetry or fiction, through the stimulus that his college society first gave him. He thought that he

could not make a speech, but one day, much against his will, he found that the opinion of his fellow students compelled him to make a speech, and the result was that he proved to be better qualified than others to do what he had imagined impossible. So with the first efforts in many directions. The majority forces us to make them; and in such instances the influence of the majority is to develop individual power. But I will still say that here the value of such societies begins and ends. There are wonderful societies of this kind in all the great colleges and universities of the world; and they help to develop the first budding of talent, the first literary and artistic ambition. But the best of them never produce anything great. They work with raw material; the very best things published by students of the great English universities, for example, are always somewhat immature. If we acknowledge that some stimulus of a healthy kind is given to literary ambition by this form of co-operation, then we grant about all that can be granted.

Once that the individual mind blossoms and develops, from that moment the influence of societies ceases to be a benefit, and threatens to become an injury. The very same social opinion that compelled and encouraged the first effort would almost certainly oppose itself to further development after a certain fixed degree. The

early encouragement might be voiced in some such persuasion as this: "Try to show yourself as clever as the rest of us." But at a later time, the social opinion would certainly declare, "You must not be eccentric and think so differently from the rest of us. If you do think that way, please do not express your opinions, for they will not be tolerated." I am putting the case rather strongly, of course. But the second form of address just quoted is really that form of address which the world uses to every kind of original talent. The world is not nearly so liberal, generous, appreciative, as the literary societies of colleges and of universities. Public opinion is above all things conservative in almost every direction in which original talent aims. Instinctively it attempts to block every departure from conventional ways of thought and action. And any mature society of a certain average size is pretty sure to represent public opinion in a strong form. It will therefore be much more likely to act as a strangling power than as a developing power. I would venture to say, however, that the proper conditions of literary independence and mutual encouragement in a literary society must depend very much upon the number of its members. And I should put the number very low — so low that I think you will be rather surprised at the state-

ment. I do not think that a literary society of the sort to which I have referred, should consist at any time of more than two or three persons. Combinations of three have been proved both possible and beneficial. Any larger figure, even four, I should think dangerous. And the combination of three should be, I think, a combination of differences, not of similarities. The durability of the brotherhood would depend upon mutual appreciation, not upon unity of idealism or singleness of opinion. But naturally this question comes up, "Can we call a fraternity of three persons a literary society?" Perhaps not; yet I firmly believe that any larger combination of individuals for a literary purpose would not accomplish any good, and should not be formed, except for such purposes as that of giving financial aid. Now I shall try to explain why.

Experience among professional men of letters tends to show that there is but one way, one influence, through which they can really assist each other toward the realization of higher things — that is, friendship and sympathy. Friendship, real friendship, admits of perfect freedom between mind and mind, perfect frankness, perfect understanding, and therefore complete sympathy. But the conditions of human nature are such that, even among common minds, perfect friendship

can seldom extend to any considerable number of persons. So there is a Spanish proverb on the subject, which is worth quoting:

> Compania de uno, compania ninguno;
> Compania de dos, compania de Dios,
> Compania de tres, compania es;
> Compania de cuatro, compania de Diablo.

Which is to say, one is no company; two is God's company; three is company; but four is the Devil's company. Now though it may seem funny, this proverb is really wise, as most Spanish proverbs are; for it signifies that a perfect friendship of more than three has been found very difficult. When four make the company, a division of opinion or feeling is almost certain to result; for two will be apt to unite against one or both of the others, when some vexed question arises. I believe that you must have known this to be true in your own experience. At all events, a literary association made for real and serious literary objects of a high class, can only be beneficial and enduring if built upon friendship and sympathy; and friendship and sympathy of the quality needed cannot be expected from a combination of more than three.

Perhaps you will think of the Pre-Raphaelite brotherhood, and other societies. But now that we have full details about these societies, we find

that they were societies in name rather than in fact. The Pre-Raphaelite society existed only by groups of three, and these groups touched each other only at long intervals. Moreover, the only thing that kept the three affiliated even by the thinnest of threads, was a certain business necessity. I believe you will find in the history of English literature that nearly all great men have been solitary workers, and have had remarkably few friends. Certainly this has been the case in modern times. I cannot think of any way in which a literary combination could be of serious value to a serious literary worker, except in the manner that I have indicated.

You will perhaps remember that in England and in America there are thousands of "literary societies," that almost every country town has a literary society of some kind; indeed, I might remark that even in Yokohama and in Kobe the foreign merchants have made a "literary society." But it does not at all follow that these societies are literary because they are called literary. Do not be deceived by this fact of the popularity of literary societies in England and elsewhere. Such societies are formed for purposes of which the average student has no idea. They are formed for purely social purposes, to bring young men and women together, to enable parents to marry their daughters, to enable small musi-

cians or small poets or popular journalists to obtain a little social influence. I do not care how big the society may be, that is the real end of it. There is a little music, a little speaking, a commonplace essay. Then there is a great deal of introduction and of social gossip. This is only a commonplace and vulgar playing with the subject of literature; it is worse than playing — it is pretending. And I am speaking to superior men, to educated men. As a university man must take literature seriously, he cannot be interested in nonsense of the sort which I have been describing, and only as nonsense can the thing exist for him. You do not find real men of letters bothering themselves with societies of that kind.

Now, to sum up, I will say that literary societies of a serious character, such as those formed in universities, and sometimes outside of them, have this value — they will help men to rise up to the general level. Now "the general level" means mediocrity; it cannot mean anything else. But young students of either sex, or young persons of sentiment, must begin by rising to mediocrity; they must grow. Therefore I say that such societies give valuable encouragement to young people. But though the societies help you to rise to the general level, they will never help you to rise above it. And therefore I think that the man who has reached his full intellectual strength

can derive no benefit from them. Literature, in the true sense, is not what remains at the general level; it is the exceptional, the extraordinary, the powerful, the unexpected, that soars far above the general level. And therefore I think that a university graduate intending to make literature his profession, should no more hamper himself by belonging to literary societies, than a man intending to climb a mountain should begin by tying a very large stone to the ankle of each foot.

And yet, in spite of what I have said against the serious value of literary societies, I must confess I myself belong to a literary society. But it is really the most sensible society of the kind imaginable. There are no meetings which one is obliged to attend; there is no demand for literary work of any sort; you are not even obliged to know the other members of the society. We make every year a contribution of money; but we must contribute for twenty years and never get anything in return. Then you might ask, what is the use of such a society? It is very useful indeed. Thousands of writers belong to it, but very few of them use it. The object of the society is to provide money for the employment of good lawyers to defend the interests of authors against dishonourable publishers. Authors are generally very poor men, and very easy to take advantage of in business. To go to law with a

publisher is out of the power of a poor man, in nine cases out of ten. But if a thousand poor men get together, each to contribute every year a small sum in the interests of right and justice, without asking any direct return for it, then a great deal may be done. As it is, the society employs very skilful lawyers and advisors. If any one member of the society be unjustly treated, all the others thus combine to defend him. Now that is an illustration of what a society really should be formed for — only to do for each of its members what the individuals cannot possibly do for themselves. Otherwise there is absolute independence. No man is obliged to give his time or his work to the society at home; there is no literary labour attempted; all the legal work is done by persons hired by the society. I think that a society of that kind formed with the general object of protecting the interests of Japanese authors, and therefore of protecting the growth of future Japanese literature, would be of great service. But otherwise I can imagine no value to university graduates in a literary society of any sort, containing more than three members.

CHAPTER VIII

ON READING

I wish to keep my promise regarding a series of lectures relating to literary life and work, to be given independently of texts or authorities, and to represent, as far as possible, the results of practical experience among the makers of literature in different countries. The subject will be Reading — apparently, perhaps, a very simple subject, but really not so simple as it looks, and much more important than you may think it. I shall begin this lecture by saying that very few persons know how to read. Considerable experience with literature is needed before taste and discrimination can possibly be acquired; and without these, it is almost impossible to learn how to read. I say *almost* impossible; since there are some rare men who, through a natural inborn taste, through a kind of inherited literary instinct, are able to read very well even before reaching the age of twenty-five years. But these are great exceptions, and I am speaking of the average.

For, to read the characters or the letters of the text does not mean reading in the true sense. You will often find yourselves reading words or

characters automatically, even pronouncing them quite correctly, while your minds are occupied with a totally different subject. This mere mechanism of reading becomes altogether automatic at an early period of life, and can be performed irrespective of attention. Neither can I call it reading to extract the narrative portion of a text from the rest simply for one's personal amusement, or, in other words, to read a book "for the story." Yet most of the reading that is done in the world is done in exactly this way. Thousands and thousands of books are bought every year, every month, I might even say every day, by people who do not read at all. They only think that they read. They buy books just to amuse themselves, "to kill time," as they call it; in one hour or two their eyes have passed over all the pages, and there is left in their minds a vague idea or two about what they have been looking at; and this they really believe is reading. Nothing is more common than to be asked, "Have you read such a book?" or to hear somebody say, "I have read such and such a book." But these persons do not speak seriously. Out of a thousand persons who say, "I have read this," or "I have read that," there is not one perhaps who is able to express any opinion worth hearing about what he has been reading. Many and many a time I hear students say that they have read certain books; but if I

ask them some questions regarding the book, I find that they are not able to make any answer, or at best, they will only repeat something that somebody else has said about what they think that they have been reading. But this is not peculiar to students; it is in all countries the way that the great public devour books. And to conclude this introductory part of the lecture, I would say that the difference between the great critic and the common person is chiefly that the great critic knows how to read, and that the common person does not. No man is really able to read a book who is not able to express an original opinion regarding the contents of a book.

No doubt you will think that this statement of the case confuses reading with study. You might say, "When we read history or philosophy or science, then we do read very thoroughly, studying all the meanings and bearings of the text, slowly, and thinking about it. This is hard study. But when we read a story or a poem out of class-hours, we read for amusement. Amusement and study are two different things." I am not sure that you all think this; but young men generally do so think. As a matter of fact, every book worth reading ought to be read in precisely the same way that a scientific book is read — not simply for amusement; and every book worth reading should have the same amount of value in it that a sci-

entific book has, though the value may be of a totally different kind. For, after all, the good book of fiction or romance or poetry is a scientific work; it has been composed according to the best principles of more than one science, but especially according to the principles of the great science of life, the knowledge of human nature.

In regard to foreign books, this is especially true; but the advice suggested will be harder to follow, when we read in a language which is not our own. Nevertheless, how many Englishmen do you suppose really read a good book in English? how many Frenchmen read a great book in their own tongue? Probably not more than one in two thousand of those who think that they read. What is more, although there are now published every year in London upwards of six thousand books, at no time has there been so little good reading done by the average public as today. Books are written, sold, and read after a fashion — or rather according to the fashion. There is a fashion in literature as well as in everything else; and a particular kind of amusement being desired by the public, a particular kind of reading is given to supply the demand. So useless have become to this public the arts and graces of real literature, the great thoughts which should belong to a great book, that men of letters have almost ceased to produce true literature. When

a man can obtain a great deal of money by writing a book without style or beauty, a mere narrative to amuse, and knows at the same time that if he should give three, five, or ten years to the production of a really good book, he would probably starve to death, he is forced to be untrue to the higher duties of his profession. Men happily situated in regard to money matters, might possibly attempt something great from time to time; but they can hardly get a hearing. Taste is so much deteriorated within the past few years, that, as I told you before, style has practically disappeared — and style means thinking. And this state of things in England has been largely brought about by bad habits of reading, by not knowing how to read.

For the first thing which a scholar should bear in mind is that a book ought not to be read for mere amusement. Half-educated persons read for amusement, and are not to be blamed for it; they are incapable of appreciating the deeper qualities that belong to a really great literature. But a young man who has passed through a course of university training should discipline himself at an early day never to read for mere amusement. And once the habit of the discipline has been formed, he will even find it impossible to read for mere amusement. He will then impatiently throw down any book from which he cannot ob-

tain intellectual food, any book which does not make an appeal to the higher emotions and to his intellect. But on the other hand, the habit of reading for amusement becomes with thousands of people exactly the same kind of habit as wine-drinking or opium-smoking; it is like a narcotic, something that helps to pass the time, something that keeps up a perpetual condition of dreaming, something that eventually results in destroying all capacity for thought, giving exercise only to the surface parts of the mind, and leaving the deeper springs of feeling and the higher faculties of perception unemployed.

Let us simply state what the facts are about this kind of reading. A young clerk, for example, reads every day on the way to his office and on the way back, just to pass the time; and what does he read? A novel, of course; it is very easy work, and it enables him to forget his troubles for a moment, to dull his mind to all the the little worries of his daily routine. In one or two days he finishes the novel; then he gets another. He reads quickly in these days. By the end of the year he has read between a hundred and fifty and two hundred novels; no matter how poor he is, this luxury is possible to him, because of the institution of circulating libraries. At the end of a few years he has read several thousand novels. Does he like them? No; he will tell

you that they are nearly all the same, but they help him to pass away his idle time; they have become a necessity for him; he would be very unhappy if he could not continue this sort of reading. It is utterly impossible that the result can be anything but a stupefying of the faculties. He cannot even remember the names of twenty or thirty books out of thousands; much less does he remember what they contain. The result of all this reading means nothing but a cloudiness in his mind. That is the direct result. The indirect result is that the mind has been kept from developing itself. All development necessarily means some pain; and such reading as I speak of has been employed unconsciously as a means to avoid that pain, and the consequence is atrophy.

Of course this is an extreme case; but it is the ultimate outcome of reading for amusement whenever such amusement becomes a habit, and when there are means close at hand to gratify the habit. At present in Japan there is little danger of this state of things; but I use the illustration for the sake of its ethical warning.

This does not mean that there is any sort of good literature which should be shunned. A good novel is just as good reading as even the greatest philosopher can possibly wish for. The whole matter depends upon the way of reading, even more than upon the nature of what is read.

Perhaps it is too much to say, as has often been said, that there is no book which has nothing good in it; it is better simply to state that the good of a book depends incomparably more for its influence upon the habits of the reader than upon the art of the writer, no matter how great that writer may be.

In a previous lecture I tried to call your attention to the superiority of the child's methods of observation to those of the man; and the same fact may be noticed in regard to the child's method of reading. Certainly the child can read only very simple things; but he reads most thoroughly; and he thinks and thinks and thinks untiringly about what he reads; one little fairy tale will give him mental occupation for a month after he has read it. All the energies of his little fancy are exhausted upon the tale; and if his parents be wise, they do not allow him to read a second tale, until the pleasure of the first, and its imaginative effect, has begun to die away. Later habits, habits which I shall venture to call bad, soon destroy the child's power of really attentive reading. But let us now take the case of a professional reader, a scientific reader; and we shall observe the same power, developed of course to an enormous degree. In the office of a great publishing house which I used to visit, there are received every year sixteen thousand manuscripts.

All these must be looked at and judged; and such work in all publishing offices is performed by what is called professional readers. The professional reader must be a scholar, and a man of very uncommon capacity. Out of a thousand manuscripts he will read perhaps not more than one; out of two thousand he may possibly read three. The others he simply looks at for a few seconds — one glance is enough for him to decide whether the manuscript is worth reading or not. The shape of a single sentence will tell him that, from the literary point of view. As regards subject, even the title is enough for him to judge, in a large number of cases. Some manuscripts may receive a minute or even five minutes of his attention; very few receive a longer consideration. Out of sixteen thousand, we may suppose that sixteen are finally selected for judgment. He reads these from beginning to end. Having read them, he decides that only eight can be further considered. The eight are read a second time, much more carefully. At the close of the second examination the number is perhaps reduced to seven. These seven are destined for a third reading; but the professional reader knows better than to read them immediately. He leaves them locked up in a drawer, and passes a whole week without looking at them. At the end of the week he tries to see whether he can remem-

ber distinctly each of these seven manuscripts and their qualities. Very distinctly he remembers three; the remaining four he can not at once recall. With a little more effort, he is able to remember two more. But two he has utterly forgotten. This is a fatal defect; the work that leaves no impression upon the mind after two readings can not have real value. He then takes the manuscripts out of the drawer, condemns two — the two he could not remember — and re-reads the five. At the third reading everything is judged — subject, execution, thought, literary quality. Three are discovered to be first class; two are accepted by the publishers only as second class. And so the matter ends.

Something like this goes on in all great publishing houses; but unfortunately not all literary work is now judged in the same severe way. It is now judged rather by what the public likes; and the public does not like the best. But you may be sure that in a house such as that of the Cambridge or the Oxford University publishers, the test of a manuscript is very severe indeed; it is there read much more thoroughly than it is likely ever to be read again. Now this professional reader whom we speak of, with all his knowledge and scholarship and experience, reads the book very much in the same way as the child reads a fairy-tale. He has forced his mind to exert all

its powers in the same minute way that the child's mind does, to think about everything in the book, in all its bearings, in a hundred different directions. It is not true that a child is a bad reader; the habit of bad reading is only formed much later in life, and is always unnatural. The natural and also the scholarly way of reading is the child's way. But it requires what we are apt to lose as we grow up, the golden gift of patience; and without patience nothing, not even reading, can be well done.

Important then as careful reading is, you can readily perceive that it should not be wasted. The powers of a well-trained and highly educated mind ought not to be expended upon any common book. By common I mean cheap and useless literature. Nothing is so essential to self-training as the proper choice of books to read; and nothing is so universally neglected. It is not even right that a person of ability should waste his time in " finding out " what to read. He can easily obtain a very correct idea of the limits of the best in all departments of literature, and keep to that best. Of course, if he has to become a specialist, a critic, a professional reader, he will have to read what is bad as well as what is good, and will be able to save himself from much torment only by an exceedingly rapid exercise of judgment, formed by experience. Imagine, for

example, the reading that must have been done, and thoroughly done, by such a critic as Professor Saintsbury. Leaving out of the question all his university training, and his mastery of Greek and Latin classics, which is no small reading to begin with, he must have read some five thousand books in the English of all centuries,—learned thoroughly everything that was in them, the history of each one, and the history of its author, whenever that was accessible. He must also have mastered thoroughly the social and political history relating to all this mass of literature. But this is still less than half his work. For being an authority upon two literatures, his study of French, both old and new French, must have been even more extensive than his study of English. And all his work had to be read as a master reads; there was little mere amusement in the whole from beginning to end. The only pleasure could be in results; but these results are very great. Nothing is more difficult in this world than to read a book and then to express clearly and truly in a few lines exactly what the literary value of the book is. There are not more than twenty people in the world that can do this, for the experience as well as the capacity required must be enormous. Very few of us can hope to become even third or fourth class critics after even a lifetime of study. But we can all

learn to read; and that is not by any means a small feat. The great critics can best show us the way to do this, by their judgment.

Yet after all, the greatest of critics is the public — not the public for a day or a generation, but the public of centuries, the consensus of national opinion or of human opinion about a book that has been subjected to the awful test of time. Reputations are made not by critics, but by the accumulation of human opinion through hundreds of years. And human opinion is not sharply defined like the opinion of a trained critic; it cannot explain; it is vague, like a great emotion of which we cannot exactly describe the nature; it is based upon feeling rather than upon thinking; it only says, "we like this." Yet there is no judgment so sure as this kind of judgment, for it is the outcome of an enormous experience. The test of a good book ought always to be the test which human opinion, working for generations, applies. And this is very simple.

The test of a great book is whether we want to read it only once or more than once. Any really great book we want to read the second time even more than we wanted to read it the first time; and every additional time that we read it we find new meanings and new beauties in it. A book that a person of education and good taste does not care to read more than once is very prob-

ably not worth much. Some time ago there was a very clever discussion going on regarding the art of the great French novelist, Zola; some people claimed that he possessed absolute genius; others claimed that he had only talent of a very remarkable kind. The battle of argument brought out some strange extravagances of opinion. But suddenly a very great critic simply put this question: "How many of you have read, or would care to read, one of Zola's books a second time?" There was no answer; the fact was settled. Probably no one would read a book by Zola more than once; and this is proof positive that there is no great genius in them, and no great mastery of the highest form of feeling. Shallow or false any book must be, that, although bought by a hundred thousand readers, is never read more than once. But we can not consider the judgment of a single individual infallible. The opinion that makes a book great must be the opinion of many. For even the greatest critics are apt to have certain dulnesses, certain inappreciations. Carlyle, for example, could not endure Browning; Byron could not endure some of the greatest of English poets. A man must be many-sided to utter a trustworthy estimate of many books. We may doubt the judgment of the single critic at times. But there is no doubt possible in regard to the judgment of generations. Even if we can-

not at once perceive anything good in a book which has been admired and praised for hundreds of years, we may be sure that by trying, by studying it carefully, we shall at last be able to feel the reason of this admiration and praise. The best of all libraries for a poor man would be a library entirely composed of such great works only, books which have passed the test of time.

This then would be the most important guide for us in the choice of reading. We should read only the books that we want to read more than once, nor should we buy any others, unless we have some special reason for so investing money. The second fact demanding attention is the general character of the value that lies hidden within all such great books. They never become old: their youth is immortal. A great book is not apt to be comprehended by a young person at the first reading except in a superficial way. Only the surface, the narrative, is absorbed and enjoyed. No young man can possibly see at first reading the qualities of a great book. Remember that it has taken humanity in many cases hundreds of years to find out all that there is in such a book. But according to a man's experience of life, the text will unfold new meanings to him. The book that delighted us at eighteen, if it be a good book, will delight us much more at twenty-five, and it will prove like a new book to us at

thirty years of age. At forty we shall re-read it, wondering why we never saw how beautiful it was before. At fifty or sixty years of age the same facts will repeat themselves. A great book grows exactly in proportion to the growth of the reader's mind. It was the discovery of this extraordinary fact by generations of people long dead that made the greatness of such works as those of Shakespeare, of Dante, or of Goethe. Perhaps Goethe can give us at this moment the best illustration. He wrote a number of little stories in prose, which children like, because to children they have all the charm of fairy-tales. But he never intended them for fairy-tales; he wrote them for experienced minds. A young man finds very serious reading in them; a middle aged man discovers an extraordinary depth in their least utterance; and an old man will find in them all the world's philosophy, all the wisdom of life. If one is very dull, he may not see much in them, but just in proportion as he is a superior man, and in proportion as his knowledge of life has been extensive, so will he discover the greatness of the mind that conceived them.

This does not mean that the authors of such books could have preconceived the entire range and depth of that which they put into their work. Great art works unconsciously without ever suspecting that it is great; and the larger the genius

of a writer, the less chance there is of his ever knowing that he has genius; for his power is less likely to be discovered by the public until long after he is dead. The great things done in literature have not usually been done by men who thought themselves great. Many thousand years ago some wanderer in Arabia, looking at the stars of the night, and thinking about the relation of man to the unseen powers that shaped the world, uttered all his heart in certain verses that have been preserved to us in the Book of Job. To him the sky was a solid vault; of that which might exist beyond it, he never even dreamed. Since his time how vast has been the expansion of our astronomical knowledge! We now know thirty millions of suns, all of which are probably attended by planets, giving a probable total of three hundred millions of other worlds within sight of our astronomical instruments. Probably multitudes of these are inhabited by intelligent life; it is even possible that within a few years more we shall obtain proof positive of the existence of an older civilization than our own upon the planet Mars. How vast a difference between our conception of the universe and Job's conception of it. Yet the poem of that simple minded Arab or Jew has not lost one particle of its beauty and value because of this difference. Quite the contrary! With every new astronomical discov-

ery the words of Job take grander meanings to us, simply because he was truly a great poet and spoke only the truth that was in his heart thousands of years ago. Very anciently also there was a Greek story-teller who wrote a little story about a boy and girl in the country called "Daphnis and Chloe." It was a little story, telling in the simplest language possible how that boy and girl fell in love with each other, and did not know why, and all the innocent things they said to each other, and how grown-up people kindly laughed at them and taught them some of the simplest laws of life. What a trifling subject, some might think. But that story, translated into every language in the world, still reads like a new story to us; and every time we re-read it, it appears still more beautiful, because it teaches a few true and tender things about innocence and the feeling of youth. It never can grow old, any more than the girl and boy whom it describes. Or, to descend to later times, about three hundred years ago a French priest conceived the idea of writing down the history of a student who had been charmed by a wanton woman, and led by her into many scenes of disgrace and pain. This little book, called "Manon Lescaut," describes for us the society of a vanished time, a time when people wore swords and powdered their hair, a time when everything was as dif-

ferent as possible from the life of today. But the story is just as true of our own time as of any time in civilization; the pain and the sorrow affect us just as if they were our own; and the woman, who is not really bad, but only weak and selfish, charms the reader almost as much as she charmed her victim, until the tragedy ends. Here again is one of the world's great books, that cannot die. Or, to take one more example out of a possible hundred, consider the stories of Hans Andersen. He conceived the notion that moral truths and social philosophy could be better taught through little fairy-tales and child stories than in almost any other way; and with the help of hundreds of old fashioned tales, he made a new series of wonderful stories that have become a part of every library and are read in all countries by grown up people much more than by children. There is in this astonishing collection of stories, a story about a mermaid which I suppose you have all read. Of course there can be no such thing as a mermaid; from one point of view the story is quite absurd. But the emotions of unselfishness and love and loyalty which the story expresses are immortal, and so beautiful that we forget about all the unreality of the framework; we see only the eternal truth behind the fable.

You will understand now exactly what I mean

by a great book. What about the choice of books? Some years ago you will remember that an Englishman of science, Sir John Lubbock, wrote a list of what he called the best books in the world — or at least the best hundred books. Then some publishers published the hundred books in cheap form. Following the example of Sir John, other literary men made different lists of what they thought the best hundred books in existence; and now quite enough time has passed to show us the value of these experiments. They have proved utterly worthless, except to the publishers. Many persons may buy the hundred books; but very few read them. And this is not because Sir John Lubbock's idea was bad; it is because no one man can lay down a definite course of reading for the great mass of differently constituted minds. Sir John expressed only his opinion of what most appealed to him; another man of letters would have made a different list; probably no two men of letters would have made exactly the same one. The choice of great books must under all circumstances be an individual one. In short, you must choose for yourselves according to the light that is in you. Very few persons are so many sided as to feel inclined to give their best attention to many different kinds of literature. In the average of cases it is better for a man to confine himself to a small class of sub-

jects — the subjects best according with his natural powers and inclinations, the subjects that please him. And no man can decide for us without knowing our personal character and disposition perfectly well and being in sympathy with it, where our powers lie. But one thing is easy to do — that is, to decide, first, what subject in literature has already given you pleasure, to decide, secondly, what is the best that has been written upon that subject, and then to study that best to the exclusion of ephemeral and trifling books which profess to deal with the same theme, but which have not yet obtained the approbation of great critics or of a great public opinion.

Those books which have obtained both are not so many in number as you might suppose. Each great civilization has produced only two or three of the first rank, if we except the single civilization of the Greeks. The sacred books embodying the teaching of all great religions necessarily take place in the first rank, even as literary productions; for they have been polished and repolished, and have been given the highest possible literary perfection of which the language in which they are written is capable. The great epic poems which express the ideals of races, these also deserve a first place. Thirdly, the masterpieces of drama, as reflecting life, must be considered to belong to the highest literature. But

how many books are thus represented? Not very many. The best, like diamonds, will never be found in great quantities.

Besides such general indications as I thus ventured, something may be said regarding a few choice books — those which a student should wish to possess good copies of and read all his life. There are not many of these. For European students it would be necessary to name a number of Greek authors. But without a study of the classic tongues such authors could be of much less use to the students of this country; moreover, a considerable knowledge of Greek life and Greek civilization is necessary to quicken appreciation of them. Such knowledge is best gained through engravings, pictures, coins, statues — through those artistic objects which enable the imagination to see what has existed; and as yet the artistic side of classical study is scarcely possible in Japan, for want of pictorial and other material. I shall therefore say very little regarding the great books that belong to this category. But as the whole foundation of European literature rests upon classical study, the student should certainly attempt to master the outlines of Greek mythology, and the character of the traditions which inspired the best of Greek literature and drama. You can scarcely open an English book belonging to any high class of literature, in which you will

not find allusions to Greek beliefs, Greek stories, or Greek plays. The mythology is almost necessary for you; but the vast range of the subject might well deter most of you from attempting a thorough study of it. A thorough study of it, however, is not necessary. What is necessary is an outline only; and a good book, capable of giving you that outline in a vivid and attractive manner would be of inestimable service. In French and German there are many such books; in English, I know of only one, a volume in Bohn's Library, Keightley's "Mythology of Ancient Greece and Italy." It is not an expensive work; and it has the exceptional quality of teaching in a philosophical spirit. As for the famous Greek books, the value of most of them for you must be small, because the number of adequate translations is small. I should begin by saying that all verse translations are useless. No verse translation from the Greek can reproduce the Greek verse — we have only twenty or thirty lines of Homer translated by Tennyson, and a few lines of other Greek poets translated by equally able men, which are at all satisfactory. Under all circumstances take a prose translation when you wish to study a Greek or Latin author. We should of course consider Homer first. I do not think that you can afford not to read something of Homer. There are two excellent prose translations in Eng-

lish, one of the Iliad and one of the Odyssey. The latter is for you the more important of the two great poems. The references to it are innumerable in all branches of literature; and these references refer usually to the poetry of its theme, for the Odyssey is much more a romance than is the Iliad. The advantage of the prose translation by Lang and Butcher is that it preserves something of the rolling sound and music of the Greek verse, though it is only prose. That book I should certainly consider worth keeping constantly by you; its utility will appear to you at a later day. The great Greek tragedies have all been translated; but I should not so strongly recommend these translations to you. It would be just as well, in most cases, to familiarize yourselves with the stories of the dramas through other sources; and there are hundreds of these. You should at least know the subject of the great dramas of Sophocles, Æschylus, and above all Euripides. Greek drama was constructed upon a plan that requires much study to understand correctly; it is not necessary that you should understand these matters as an antiquarian does, but it is necessary to know something of the stories of the great plays. As for comedy, the works of Aristophanes are quite exceptional in their value and interest. They require very little explanation; they make us laugh today just as heartily

as they made the Athenians laugh thousands of years ago; and they belong to immortal literature. There is the Bohn translation in two volumes, which I would strongly recommend. Aristophanes is one of the great Greek dramatists whom we can read over and over again, gaining at every reading. Of the lyrical poets there is also one translation likely to become an English classic, although a modern one; that is Lang's translation of Theocritus, a tiny little book, but very precious of its kind. You see I am mentioning very few; but these few would mean a great deal for you, should you use them properly. Among later Greek work, work done in the decline of the old civilization, there is one masterpiece that the world will never become tired of — I mentioned it before, the story of "Daphnis and Chloe." This has been translated into every language, and I am sorry to say that the best translation is not English, but French — the version of Amyot. But there are many English translations. That book you certainly ought to read. About the Latin authors, it is not here necessary to say much. There are very good prose translations of Virgil and Horace, but the value of these to you can not be very great without a knowledge of Latin. However, the story of the Æneid is necessary to know, and it were best read in the version of Conington. In the course of your gen-

eral education it is impossible to avoid learning something regarding the chief Latin writers and thinkers; but there is one immortal book that you may not have often seen the name of; and it is a book everybody should read — I mean the "Golden Ass" of Apuleius. You have this in a good English translation. It is only a story of sorcery, but one of the most wonderful stories ever written, and it belongs to world literature rather than to the literature of a time.

But the Greek myths, although eternally imperishable in their beauty, are not more intimately related to English literature than are the myths of the ancient English religion, the religion of the Northern races, which has left its echoes all through our forms of speech, even in the names of the days of the week. A student of English literature ought to know something about Northern mythology. It is full of beauty also, beauty of another and stranger kind; and it embodied one of the noblest warrior-faiths that ever existed, the religion of force and courage. You have now in the library a complete collection of Northern poetry, I mean the two volumes of the "Corpus Poeticum Boreali." Unfortunately you have not as yet a good collection of the Sagas and Eddas. But, as in the case of the vaster subject of Greek mythology, there is an excellent small book in English, giving an outline of all that is

important — I mean necessary for you — in regard to both the religion and the literature of the Northern races, Mallet's "Northern Antiquities." Sir Walter Scott contributed the most valuable portion of the translations in this little book; and these translations have stood the test of time remarkably well. The introductory chapters by Bishop Percy are old fashioned, but this fact does not in the least diminish the stirring value of the volume. I think it is one of the books that every student should try to possess.

With regard to the great modern masterpieces translated into English from other tongues, I can only say that it is better to read them in the originals, if you can. If you can read Goethe's "Faust" in German, do not read it in English; and if you can read Heine in German, the French translation in prose, which he superintended, and the English translations (there are many of them) in verse can be of no use to you. But if German be too difficult, then read "Faust" in the prose version of Hayward, as revised by Dr. Buchheim. You have that in the library; and it is the best of the kind in existence. "Faust" is a book that a man should buy and keep, and read many times during his life. As for Heine, he is a world poet, but he loses a great deal in translation; and I can only recommend the French prose version of him; the English versions of Brown-

ing and Lazarus and others are often weak. Some years ago a series of extraordinary translations of Heine appeared in *Blackwood's Magazine;* but these have not appeared, I believe, in book form.

As for Dante, I do not know whether he can make a strong appeal to you in any language except his own; and you must understand the Middle Ages very well to feel how wonderful he was. I might say something similar about other great Italian poets. Of the French dramatists, you must study Molière; he is next in importance only to Shakespeare. But do not read him in any translation. Here I should say positively, that one who cannot read French might as well leave Molière alone; the English language cannot reproduce his delicacies of wit and allusion.

As for modern English literature, I have tried in the course of my lectures to indicate the few books deserving of a place in world-literature; and I need scarcely repeat them here. Going back a little further, however, I should like to remind you again of the extraordinary merit of Malory's book, the "Morte D'Arthur," and to say that it is one of the very few that you should buy and keep and read often. The whole spirit of chivalry is in that book; and I need scarcely tell you how deep is the relation of the spirit of chiv-

alry to all modern English literature. I do not recommend you to read Milton, unless you intend to make certain special studies of language; the linguistic value of Milton is based upon Greek and Latin literature. As for his lyrics — that is another matter. Those ought to be studied. As there is little more to say, except by way of suggestion, I think that you ought, every one of you, to have a good copy of Shakespeare, and to read Shakespeare through once every year, not caring at first whether you can understand all the sentences or not; that knowledge can be acquired at a later day. I am sure that if you follow this advice you will find Shakespeare become larger every time that you read him, and that at last he will begin to exercise a very strong and very healthy influence upon your methods of thinking and feeling. A man does not require to be a great scholar in order to read Shakespeare. And what is true of reading Shakespeare, you will find to be true also in lesser degree of all the world's great books. You will find it true of Goethe's "Faust." You will find it true of the best chapters in the poems of Homer. You will find it true of the best plays of Molière. You will find it true of Dante, and of those books in the English Bible about which I gave a short lecture last year. And therefore I do not think that I can

better conclude these remarks than by repeating an old but very excellent piece of advice which has been given to young readers: "Whenever you hear of a new book being published, read an old one."

CHAPTER IX

LITERATURE AND POLITICAL OPINION

It has been for some time my purpose to deliver a little lecture illustrating the possible relation between literature and politics — subjects that seem as much opposed to each other as any two subjects could be, yet most intimately related. You know that I have often expressed the hope that some of you will be among those who make the future literature of Japan, the literature of the coming generation; and in this connection, I should like to say that I think the creation of Japanese literature (and by literature I mean especially fiction and poetry) to be a political necessity. If "political necessity" seems to you too strong a term, I shall say national requirement; but before I reach the end of this lecture, I think you will acknowledge that I used the words "political necessity" in a strictly correct sense.

In order to explain very clearly what I mean, I must first ask you to think about the meaning of public opinion in national politics. Perhaps in Japan today public opinion may not seem to you

of paramount importance in deciding matters of statecraft, though you will acknowledge that it is a force which statesmen have, and must always have, to deal with. But in western countries, where the social conditions are very different, and where the middle classes represent the money power of the nation, public opinion may mean almost everything. I need scarcely tell you that the greatest force in England is public opinion — that is to say, the general national opinion, or rather feeling, upon any subject of moment. Sometimes this opinion may be wrong, but right or wrong is not here the question. It is the power that decides for or against war; it is the power that decides for or against reform; it is the power that to a very great degree influences English foreign policy. The same may be said regarding public opinion in France. And although Germany is, next to Russia, the most imperial of European powers, and possesses the most tremendous military force that the world has even seen, public opinion there also is still a great power in politics. But most of all, America offers the example of public opinion as government. There indeed the sentiment of the nation may be said to decide almost every question of great importance, whether domestic or foreign.

Now the whole force of such opinion in the West depends very much for its character upon

knowledge. When people are correctly informed upon a subject, they are likely, in the mass, to think correctly in regard to it. When they are ignorant of the matter, they are of course apt to think wrongly about it. But this is not all. What we do not know is always a cause of uneasiness, of suspicion, or of fear. When a nation thinks or feels suspiciously upon any subject, whether through ignorance or otherwise, its action regarding the subject is tolerably certain to be unjust. Nations, like individuals, have their prejudices, their superstitions, their treacheries, their vices. All these are of course the result of ignorance or of selfishness, or of both together. But perhaps we had better say roundly that all the evil in this world is the result of ignorance, since selfishness itself could not exist but for ignorance. You will also have remarked in your reading of modern history that the more intelligent and educated, that is to say the less ignorant, a nation is, the more likely is its policy in foreign matters to be marked by something resembling justice.

Now how is national feeling created today upon remote and foreign subjects? Perhaps some of you will answer, by newspapers — and the remark would contain some truth. But only a little truth; for newspapers do not as a rule treat of other than current events, and the writers

of newspapers themselves can write only out of the knowledge they happen to have regarding foreign and unfamiliar matters. I should say that the newspaper press has more to do with the making of prejudice than with the dissemination of accurate knowledge in regard to such matters, and that at all times its influence can be only of the moment. The real power that shapes opinion in regard to other nations and other civilizations is literature — fiction and poems. What one people in Europe knows about another people is largely obtained, not from serious volumes of statistics, or grave history, or learned books of travel, but from the literature of that people — the literature that is an expression of its emotional life.

Do not think that public opinion in western countries can be made by the teaching of great minds, or by the scholarship of a few. Public opinion, in my meaning, is not an intellectual force at all. It could not possibly be made an intellectual force. It is chiefly emotional, and may be a moral force, but nothing more. Nevertheless, even English ministers of state have to respect it always, and have to obey it very often indeed. And it is largely made, as I have told you, by literature — not the literature of philosophy and of science, but the literature of imagination and of feeling. Only thousands of people

can read books of pure science and philosophy; but millions read stories and verses that touch the heart, and through the heart influence the judgment.

I should say that English public feeling regarding many foreign countries has been very largely made by such literature. But I have time only to give you one striking example — the case of Russia. When I was a boy the public knew absolutely nothing about Russia worth knowing, except that the Russian soldiers were very hard fighters. But fighting qualities, much as the English admired them, are to be found even among savages, and English experience with Russian troops did not give any reason for a higher kind of admiration. Indeed, up to the middle of the present century the Russians were scarcely considered in England as real human kindred. The little that was known of Russian customs and Russian government was not of a kind to correct hostile feeling — quite the contrary. The cruelties of military law, the horrors of Siberian prisons,— these were often spoken of; and you will find even in the early poetry of Tennyson, even in the text of "The Princess," references to Russia of a very grim kind.

All that was soon to be changed. Presently translations into French, into German, and into English, of the great Russian authors began to

make their appearance. I believe the first remarkable work of this sort directly translated into English was Tolstoi's "Cossacks," the translator being the American minister at St. Petersburg, Mr. Schuyler. The great French writer Mérimée had already translated some of the best work of Gogol and Pushkin. These books began to excite extraordinary interest. But a much more extraordinary interest was aroused by the subsequent translations of the great novels of Turgueniev, Dostoievsky, and others. Turgueniev especially became a favourite in every cultured circle in Europe. He represented living Russia as it was — the heart of the people, and not only the heart of the people but the feelings and the manners of all classes in the great empire. His books quickly became world-books, nineteenth century classics, the reading of which was considered indispensable for literary culture. After him many other great works of Russian fiction were translated into nearly all the languages of Europe. Nor was this all. The great intellect of Russia, suddenly awakening, had begun to make itself heavily felt in the most profound branches of practical science. The most remarkable discovery of modern times in chemistry, concerning the law of atomic weights, was a Russian discovery; the most remarkable work of physiography accomplished in regard to Northern Asia

was the work of Prince Kropotkin, who still lives, and writes wonderful books and memoirs. I am mentioning only two cases out of hundreds. In medicine, in linguistics, in many other scientific directions, the influence of Russian work and thought is now widely recognized. But however scientific men might find reason to respect the Russian intellect, it is not by intellect that a nation can make itself understood abroad. The great work of making Russia understood was accomplished chiefly by her novelists and story-tellers. After having read those wonderful books, written with a simple strength of which we have no parallel example in western literature, except the works of a few Scandinavian writers, the great nations of the West could no longer think of Russians as a people having no kinship with them. Those books proved that the human heart felt and loved and suffered in Russia just as in England, or France, or Germany; but they also taught something about the peculiar and very great virtues of the Russian people, the Russian masses — their infinite patience, their courage, their loyalty, and their great faith. For, though we could not call these pictures of life beautiful (many of them are very terrible, very cruel), there is much of what is beautiful in human nature to be read between the lines. The gloom of Turgueniev and of his brothers in fiction only

serves to make the light seem more beautiful by contrast. And what has been the result? A total change of western feeling towards the Russian people. I do not mean that western opinion has been at all changed as regards the Russian government. Politically Russia remains the nightmare of Europe. But what the people are has been learned, and well learned, through Russian literature; and a general feeling of kindliness and of human sympathy has taken the place of the hatred and dislike that formerly used to tone popular utterances in regard to Russians in general.

Now you will see very clearly what I mean, what I am coming to. Vast and powerful as the Russian nation is, it has great faults, great deficiencies, such as have not characterized the people of this country for thousands of years. So far as civilization signifies manners and morals, education and industry, I should certainly say that the Japanese even hundreds of years ago were more civilized as a nation than the Russians of today, than the Russians can be even for a long time to come. Yet what is known in western countries about Japan? Almost nothing. I do not mean that there are not now hundreds of rich people who have seen Japan, and have learned something about it. Thousands of books about Japan have been written by such travellers. But

these travellers and writers represent very little; certainly they do not represent national opinion in any way. The great western peoples — the masses of them — know just as little about Japan today as was known about Russia at the beginning of this century. They know that Japan can fight well, and she has railroads, and ships of war; and that is about all that has made an impression upon the public mind. The intellectual classes of Europe know a great deal more, but as I have said, these do not make public opinion, which is largely a matter of feeling, not of thinking. National feeling can not be reached through the head; it must be reached through the heart. And there is but one class of men capable of doing this — your own men of letters. Ministers, diplomats, representatives of learned societies — none of these can do it. But a single great novelist, a single great poet, might very well do it. No one foreign in blood and in speech could do it, by any manner of means. It can only be done by Japanese literature, thought by Japanese, written by Japanese, and totally uninfluenced by foreign thinking and foreign feeling.

Let me try to put this truth a little more plainly to you by way of illustration. At present the number of books written by foreigners about Japan reaches many thousands; every year at least a dozen new books appear on the subject;

and nevertheless the western reading public knows nothing about Japan. Nor could it be said that these books have even resulted in lessening the very strong prejudices that western people feel toward all Oriental nations — prejudices partly the result of natural race-feeling, and partly the result of religious feeling. Huxley once observed that no man could imagine the power of religious prejudice until he tried to fight it. As a general rule the men who try to fight against western prejudices in regard to the religions of other peoples, are abused whenever possible, and when not possible, they are either ignored or opposed by all possible means. Even the grand Oxford undertaking of the translations of the sacred books of the eastern races was very strongly denounced in many quarters; and the translators are still accused of making eastern religions seem more noble than they really could be. I mention this fact only as an illustration of one form of prejudice; and there are hundreds of others. At the present time any person who attempts to oppose these, has no chance of being fairly heard. But the general opinion is that any good things said about the civilization, the ethics, the industry, or the faith of Japan, are said for selfish motives — for reasons of flattery or fear or personal gain; and that the unkind, untruthful, and stupid things said, are said by brave, frank,

independent, and very wise people. And why is this? Because the good and bad alike have been said only by foreigners. What any foreigner now says about Japanese life and thought and character will have very little influence on the good side, though it may have considerable influence on the other side. This is inevitable. Moreover, remember that the work done by foreigners in the most appreciative and generous directions has not been of a kind that could reach the western mass of readers. It could reach only small intellectual circles. You can not touch the minds of a great people by mere books of travel, or by essays, or by translations of literature having nothing in common with western feeling. You can reach them only through more humane literature, fiction and poetry, novels and stories. If only foreigners had written about Russia, the English people would still think of the Russian upper class as barbarians, and would scarcely think of the great nation itself as being humanly related to them. All prejudices are due to ignorance; ignorance can be dissipated best by appeals to the nobler emotions. And the nobler emotions are best inspired by pure literature.

I should suppose that more than one of you would feel inclined to ask, "What need we care about the prejudices and the stupidities of ignorant people in western countries?" Well, I have

already told you that at the present time these relatively ignorant and stupid millions have a great deal to do with state-policy. It is the opinion of the ignorant, much more than the opinion of the wise, that regulates the policy of western governments with foreign nations. That would be a good reason of itself. But I will now go further, and say that I think the absence of a modern Japanese literature, such as I am advocating, is indirectly to be regretted also for commercial reasons. It is quite true that commerce and trade are not exactly moral occupations; they are conducted according to relative morality, perhaps, not according to positive morality. In short, business is not moral. It is a kind of competition; and all competitions are in the nature of war. But in this war, which is necessary, and which can not be escaped, a very great deal depends upon the feelings with which the antagonists regard each other. A very great deal depends upon sympathy, even in business, upon an understanding of the simplest feelings regarding right and wrong, pleasure and pain; for, at bottom, all human interests are based upon these. I am quite certain that a Japanese literature capable of creating sympathy abroad would have a marked effect in ameliorating business conditions and in expanding commercial possibilities. The great mass of business is risk. Now men are

more or less in the position of enemies, when they have to risk without perfect knowledge of all the conditions upon the other side. In short, people are afraid of what they do not understand. And there is no way by which the understanding could be so quickly imparted as through the labours of earnest men of letters. I might mention in this connection that I have seen lately letters written by merchants in a foreign country, asking for information in regard to conditions in this country, which proved the writers to know even less about Japan than they know about the moon. In ten years, two or three — nay, even one great book — would have the effect of educating whole business circles, whole millions of people in regard to what is true and good in this country.

Now I have put these thoughts before you in the roughest and simplest way possible, not because I think that they represent a complete argument on the subject, but because I trust they contain something which will provoke you to think very seriously about the matter. A man may do quite as great a service to his country by writing a book as by winning a battle. And you had proof of this fact the other day, when a young English writer fell sick, with the result that all over the world the cables were set in motion to express to him the sympathy of millions and millions of people, while kings and emperors

asked about his health. What had this young man done? Nothing except to write a few short stories and a few little songs that made all Englishmen understand each other's heart better than before, and that had made other nations better understand the English. Such a man is really worth to his country more than a king. If you will remember this, I believe the lecture I have given will bear good fruit at some future day.

CHAPTER X

FAREWELL ADDRESS

Now that the term comes to a close, I think that it would be well to talk about the possible values of the studies which we have made together, in relation to Japanese literature. For, as I have often said, the only value of foreign literary studies to you (using the word literary in the artistic sense) must be that of their effect upon your own capacity to make literature in your own tongue. Just as a Frenchman does not write English books or a German French books, except in the way of scientific treatise, so the Japanese scholar who makes literature will not waste time by attempting to make it in another language than his own. And as his own is so very differently constructed in all respects from the European languages, he can scarcely hope to obtain much in the way of new form from the study of French or English or German. So I think that we may say the chief benefit of these studies to you must be in thought, imagination and feeling. From western thought and imagination and feeling very much indeed can be obtained which will prove helpful in enriching and strengthening the Japan-

ese literature of the future. It is by such studies that all western languages obtain — and obtain continually — new life and strength. English literature owes something to almost every other literature, not only in Europe, but even in the whole civilized world. The same can be said of French and German literature — perhaps also, though in less degree, of modern Italian. But notice that the original plant is not altered by the new sap; it is only made stronger and able to bear finer flowers. As English literature remains essentially English in spite of the riches gained from all other literatures, so should future Japanese literature remain purely Japanese, no matter how much benefit it may obtain from the ideas and the arts of the West.

If you were to ask me, however, whether I knew of any great changes so far, I fear that I should be obliged to say, "no." Up to the present I think that there has been a great deal of translation and imitation and adoption into Japanese, from western literatures, but I do not think that there has been what we call true assimilation. Literature must be creative, and borrowing, or imitating, or adapting material in the raw state — none of this is creative. Yet it is natural that things should be so. This is the period of assimilation; later on the fine result will show, when all this foreign material has been trans-

muted, within the crucible of literature, into purely Japanese materials. But this can not be done quickly.

Now I want to say something about the manner in which I imagine that these changes, and a new literature, must come about. I believe that there will have to be a romantic movement in Japan, of a much more deep-reaching kind than may now appear credible. I think that — to say the strangest thing first — the language of scholarship will have to be thrown away for purposes of creative art. I think that a time must come when the scholar will not be ashamed to write in the language of the common people, to make it a vehicle of his best and strongest thought, to enter into competition with artists who would now be classed as uneducated, perhaps even vulgar men. Perhaps it will seem a strange thing to say, yet I think that there is no doubt about it. Very probably almost any university scholar consciously or unconsciously despises the colloquial art of the professional story-teller and the writer of popular plays in popular speech; nevertheless, if we can judge at all by the history of literary evolutions in other countries, it is the despised drama and the despised popular story and the vulgar song of the people which will prove the sources of future Japanese literature — a finer literature than any which has hitherto been produced.

I have not the slightest doubt that Shakespeare was considered very vulgar in the time when he wrote his plays — at least by common opinion. There were a few men intelligent enough to feel that his work was more alive than any other drama of the time. But these were exceptional men. And you know that in the eighteenth century the classical spirit was just as strong in England as it is now, or has been, in Japan. The reproach of the "vulgar," I mean the reproach of vulgarity, would have been brought in Pope's time against anybody who should have tried to write in the form which we now know to be much superior. I have told you also how the great literatures of France and Germany were obliged to pass through a revolution against classical forms, which revolution brought into existence the most glorious work, both in poetry and prose, that either country ever produced.

But remember how the revolution began to work in all these countries of the West. It began with a careful and loving study of the despised oral literature of the common people. It meant the descent of great scholars from their thrones of learning to mix with peasants and ignorant people, to speak their dialects, to sympathize with their simple but deep and true emotions. I do not say that the scholar went to live in a farmhouse, or to share the poverty and misery of the

wretched in great cities; I mean only that he descended to them in spirit — sympathized with them — conquered his prejudices — learned to love them for the simple goodness and the simple truth in their uneducated natures. I think I told you before that even at one period of old Greek literature, the Greek had to do something of very nearly the same kind. So I say that, in my humble opinion, a future literature in this country must be more or less founded upon a sympathy with and a love for the common, ignorant people, the great mass of the national humanity.

Now let me try to explain how and why these things have come to pass in almost every civilized country. The natural tendency of society is to produce class distinctions, and everywhere the necessary tendency in the highest classes must be to conservatism — elegant conservatism. Conservatism and exclusiveness have their values; and I do not mean to suggest the least disrespect toward them. But conservatism invariably tends to fixity, to mannerisms, to a hard crystallization. At length refined society obliges everybody to do and say according to rule — to express or to repress thought and feeling in the same way. Of course men's hearts can not be entirely changed by rule; but such a tyranny of custom can be made that everybody is afraid to express thought or to utter feeling in a really natural way. When life

becomes intensely artificial, severely conventional, literature begins to die. Then, western experience shows that there is one cure; nothing can bring back the failing life except a frank return to the unconventional, a frank return to the life and thought of the common people, who represent after all the soil from which everything human springs. When a language becomes hopelessly petrified by rules, it can be softened and strengthened and vivified by taking it back to its real source, the people, and soaking it there as in a bath. Everywhere this necessity has shown itself; everywhere it has been resisted with all the strength of pride and prejudice; but everywhere its outcome has been the same. French or German or English alike, after having exhausted all the resources of scholarship to perfect literature, have found literature beginning to dry and wither on their hands; and have been obliged to remove it from the atmosphere of the schools and to resurrect it by means of the literature of the ignorant. As this has happened everywhere else, I can not help believing that it must happen here.

Yet do not think that I mean to speak at all slightingly about the value of exact learning. Quite the contrary. I hold that it is the man of exact learning who best — providing that he has a sympathetic nature — can master to good result

the common speech and the unlettered poetry. A Cambridge education, for example, did not prevent Tennyson from writing astonishing ballads or dramatic poems in ballad measure in the difficult dialect of the northern English peasant. Indeed, in English literature the great Romantic reformers were all, or nearly all, well schooled men, but they were men who had artistic spirit enough to conquer the prejudices with which they were born, and without heeding the mockery of their own class, bravely worked to extract from simple peasant lore those fresh beauties which give such desirable qualities to Victorian poetry. Indeed, some went further — Sir Walter Scott, for example, who rode about the country, going into the homes of the poorest people, eating with them and drinking with them, and everywhere coaxing them to sing him a song or tell him a story of the past. I suppose there were many people who would then have laughed at Scott. But those little peasant songs which he picked out started the new English poetry. The whole literary tone of the eighteenth century was changed by them. Therefore I should certainly venture to hope that there yet may be a Japanese Walter Scott, whose learning will not prevent him from sympathizing with the unlearned.

Now I have said quite enough on that subject;

and I have ventured it only through a sense of duty. The rest of what I have to say refers only to literary work.

I suppose that most of you, on leaving the University, will step into some profession likely to absorb a great deal of your time. Under these circumstances many a young man who loves literature resigns himself foolishly to give up his pleasures in this direction; such young scholars imagine that they have no time now for poetry or romance or drama — not even for much private study. I think that this is a very great mistake, and that it is the busy man who can best give us new literature — with the solitary exception perhaps of poetry. Great poetry requires leisure, and much time for solitary thinking. But in other departments of literature I can assure you that the men-of-letters throughout the West have been, and still are, to a great extent, very busy men. Some are in the government service, some in post offices, some in the army and navy (and you know how busy military and naval officers have to be), some are bankers, judges, consuls, governors of provinces, even merchants — though these are few. The fact is that it is almost impossible for anybody to live merely by producing fine literature, and that the literary man must have, in most cases, an occupation. Every year the necessity for this becomes greater. But the principle of

literary work is really not to do much at one time, but to do a little at regular intervals. I doubt whether any of you can ever be so busy that you will not be able to spare twenty minutes or half an hour in the course of one day to literature. Even if you should give only ten minutes a day, that will mean a great deal at the end of the year. Put it in another way. Can you not write five lines of literary work daily? If you can, the question of being busy is settled at once. Multiply three hundred and sixty-five by five. That means a very respectable amount of work in twelve months. How much better if you could determine to write twenty or thirty lines every day. I hope that if any of you really love literature you will remember these few words, and never think yourselves too busy to study a little, even though it be only for ten or fifteen minutes every day. And now good-bye.

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